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NOTES ON II. SAMUEL.

BY

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*Author of "Manuals" of Exodus, St. Matthew, &c.;
the Church Catechism, and the Book of Common Prayer; and
the History and Literature of the Stuart Period,
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NOTES ON II. SAMUEL.

I. and II. Samuel make in the Jewish Canon but one book,—bearing the prophet's name. The division of the work into two originated in the Septuagint and Vulgate Versions, in which the parts are called respectively, *I. and II. Kings*.

The *authorship* of Samuel is pretty clearly indicated in I. Chron. xxix. 29,—“Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in *the book of Samuel the seer*, and in *the book of Nathan the prophet*, and in *the book of Gad the seer*.” It is generally supposed that Nathan, who lived on into Solomon's reign, compiled the work from three sources:—

1. The national annals kept by the scribes.
2. The special records of contemporary events, written by Samuel, Gad, and himself.

As Samuel's death is the first thing mentioned in I. Sam. xxv., we must limit *his* share in the narrative to cs. i.-xxiv. of that book.

3. Some book of poetry.

“*Samuel*” may have been bestowed as the title of the whole book in its original form:—

1. Because Samuel was the most distinguished, and the earliest, of the writers contributing to it; or
2. Because he had so much to do with the most prominent persons and events in Book I., especially with regard to the change of government.

“*II. Samuel*” is, of course, a misnomer, since Samuel had no share in its composition. But, as it formerly made part of the complete work bearing the prophet's name, the title was retained after the original book was split into two.

The *date* of the compilation of Samuel is not known; it must, however, have been written in its present form before the death of David, since it does not narrate that event.

II. Samuel *extends* from the Death of Saul, B.C. 1156, to

the Numbering of the People by David, and the consequent plague, B.C. 1017.

It admits of *two divisions*:—

1. Events from Saul's death, to the end of David's reign over Judah alone, (cs. i.-iv., inclusive).
2. The greater part of David's reign over Judah and Israel, (c. v.-end).

P A R T I.

CHAPTER I. 1-16, (inclusive).

An Amalekite brings tidings to David of the defeat of Israel at the Battle of Mount Gilboa, and of the death of Saul and Jonathan,—David and his men lament “until even,”—the Amalekite is slain, by order of David.

v. 1. “After the death of Saul,”—as narrated in I. Samuel xxi. 1-6, substantially thus:—

The Israelites were defeated, on Mount Gilboa, by the Philistines, who slew three of Saul's sons—Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, (in I. Chron., “Malchi-shua”). Saul, being severely wounded by the archers, begged his armour-bearer to slay him: the man refused, and Saul fell upon a sword, an example which his armour-bearer followed.

This account of Saul's death differs from that given by the Amalekite; but the latter's narrative was evidently told with a view to gaining David's favour, and must be regarded as false. The “crown” and “bracelet” he probably stole from Saul's corpse.

“*When David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites.*”—Particulars of this “slaughter” are found in I. Sam. xxx., and may be epitomized thus:—

David, fleeing from Saul, took refuge with Achish, king of Gath, who received him kindly, and gave him Ziklag. When the Philistines “gathered their armies to fight with Israel,” Achish called upon David, with his men, to accompany him, and join in battle against his own countrymen. David consented; but when the Philistine troops arrived at the rendezvous, his fellow “lords” exclaimed loudly against Achish, for bringing David, declaring that the

latter would turn against them, and fight for his old master, Saul. David was accordingly dismissed, and returned home, to find it in ruins, for, during his absence, the Amalekites had invaded Southern Palestine, burned Ziklag, and carried away all the women, children, and property, of David, and his band. He immediately started in pursuit,—overtook the marauders,—slew all of them but 400,—recovered the persons and goods which they had carried off,—and took large spoil, in addition.

v. 2. "*He fell to the earth, and did obeisance.*"—There is every probability that it was generally known amongst the Israelites that David had been anointed as Saul's successor. Hence this man, on reaching his presence, treats him as king. It was easy for him to discover David, for the latter had been nearly a year and four months with Achish, and, consequently, his whereabouts would be matter of notoriety.

v. 10. "*The crown that was upon his head.*"—This was not Saul's state diadem; but the war-crown, by which the king was customarily distinguished in the field, and which was attached to his helmet. Of this crown there were two forms in use, either of which might have been worn by Saul on this occasion:—

1. A metal circlet, (plain or enriched), surrounding the lower part of the helmet.
2. A cylindrical diadem,—rayed at the top,—surrounding, and reaching above, a cap of mail,—and itself forming a helmet.

"*The bracelet that was on his arm.*"—This was one of the badges of Saul's royalty. It was, probably, an *armlet*, worn above the elbow,—this being still one of the Persian *insignia* of kingship. The ancient British kings also wore circlets of gold round the neck, arms, and legs, as tokens of their *caste*.

CHAPTER I. 17-end.

David's Lamentation over Saul and Jonathan.

v. 18. "*Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow.*"—The words "the use of" are not in the original, whence many authorities read the passage, "Also he bade them teach the children of Judah, 'The Bow,'"—

"*The Bow being regarded by them as the name of David's song of lamentation.*"

It seems, however, on the whole, better to regard our translation as correct. If we do so, the meaning of the passage is, that David was convinced of the importance of the bow in warfare, both by the late great victory of the Philistines, (which would appear to have been chiefly owing to their archery), and by his own observation while with Achish. Accordingly, on coming to the throne of Judah, one of his first cares was to give the order here related.

The bow, though a common weapon, in the chase, amongst the Jews, was little used by them in war, before this epoch.

We read of no body of archers in the Hebrew army till after David's time; but very large ones are subsequently mentioned.

David's constant references in the Psalms to archery show how deeply he was interested in the subject.

"*The book of Jasher*,"—is referred to, also, in Joshua x. 13, where it is stated that it is written in the Book of Jasher how the "sun stood still, and the moon stayed," at Joshua's command.

Various opinions are entertained as to what this book was: the most likely being, that it was *a record of the military affairs of the Israelites*, and matters connected therewith.

If so, it was, probably, the same as *The Book of the Wars of the Lord*, alluded to in Num. xxi. 14:—

"Wherefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the Lord, 'What he did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon.'"

It may have been compiled by an individual of the name of *Jasher*; but, as *jasher* = *upright*, it is more probable that the title was given to it to indicate that *its annals were truthful*.

v. 19. "*The beauty of Israel*,"—i.e. Jonathan, for further on David exclaims, "O, Jonathan! thou wast slain in thine high places!"

"*Beauty*" here is better translated "*antelope*," or "*gazelle*." The passage then might read, "O, antelope of Israel! pierced on thy high place,"—thus instituting a beautiful metaphor, representing Jonathan, slain on Mount Gilboa, as a young antelope, pierced in its lofty, rocky, haunt.

v. 20. "*Gath*,"—"Askelon,"—two of the Five "*Lordships*" of the Philistines,—the others being Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod.

v. 21. "*Fields of offerings*,"—i.e. he desires that the harvests on Mount Gilboa may never yield anything, and so no first-fruits be again offered from them.

v. 26. "*Thy love to me was wonderful*." It was, indeed, "wonderful!" for though Jonathan well knew that David had been anointed to succeed his father, and that himself was passed over, his affection did not abate, but actually increased!

A remarkable feature of this sublime elegy is that Saul, David's ruthless enemy, is spoken of in no terms but those of the highest admiration and honour.

CHAPTER II.; III., 2-5.

David goes up, by Divine direction, to Hebron, and is there crowned king over Judah.—He commends, and promises requital to, the men of Jabesh-Gilead, for their kindness in burying Saul.—Abner makes Ish-bosheth king over Israel.—A mortal combat between 12 of Abner's, and 12 of Joab's, men; Abner is defeated, and, fleeing, slays Asahel; Joab and Abishai pursue Abner, who, joined by the Benjamites, halts, and proposes a truce; Joab consents; Abner and Joab, with their forces, retire, respectively, to Mahanaim, and Hebron.—List of David's sons born at Hebron.

v. 1. "*Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?*"—David meant by these words an enquiry whether he should assume the kingly authority, which was now his by Divine appointment, but upon which he would not enter without first consulting God, as he had ever done in all circumstances of his life.

v. 2. "*Jezreelitess*,"—a native, or inhabitant, of Jezreel, in Judah.

"*The Carmelite*,"—a native, or inhabitant, of Carmel, a town of Judah, between the wilderness of Ziph, and that of Maon.

Nabal, a wealthy, but churlish man, holding a sheep-shearing, David sent to ask for a share of the good things for himself and bands, (since they had been instrumental in protecting his flocks and herds from marauders). Nabal insultingly refused, and David set out for Carmel, intending to slay him. Abigail, learning this, met the angry outlaw with presents, and fair speeches, and induced him to pardon her husband. The latter, however, died within ten days, from the effects of heavy drinking, and discovering how near David had been to killing him. On hearing of Nabal's decease, David sent to propose marriage to Abigail, who consented.

v. 3. "*The Cities of Hebron*,"—those in the "Mountains of Judah;" Hebron was regarded as their capital.

"*Hebron*,"—was chosen for David's capital, because it was "the ancient sacred city of the tribe of Judah, and the burial place," (as well as frequent dwelling), "of the patriarchs;" and was also in the centre of the tribe of Judah. In dividing the Promised Land, Hebron, with its neighbourhood, became, at his request, the inheritance of Caleb, who drove thence the Anakim. It was afterwards made a Levitical city, and one of the Cities of Refuge.

v. 4. "*The men of Judah*,"—From the parallel passage in Chron., we find that these were the "Elders" of Judah, i.e., the Princes of the Tribe, and the heads of clans and families.

"*They anointed David*,"—This was the *public* ratification of the divinely-ordered *private* anointing by Samuel.

v. 8. "*Mahanaim*" = *two hosts*.—The name was given to the spot where Jacob met the angels, on his return from Padan-Aram, and was afterwards extended to the town built on that site, or in the neighbourhood. Mahanaim was a Levitical city.

v. 9. "*Gilead*,"—here includes all the Israelitish territory East of Jordan.

"*Ashurites*,"—tribe of Asher.

"*Jezreel*,"—the *Plain* of Jezreel, (or Esdraelon).

"*Ephraim*,"—The rivalry of Ephraim and Judah, which

finally issued in the Schism of the Tribes, began from the partition of Canaan, wherein the "royal tribe" received the "lion's share." Judah, which possessed the promise of the "Sceptre," was, from the first settlement of the country, regarded as the chief tribe, and acted always for itself; but the central position of Ephraim, the long-continued authority of Joshua, (who belonged to this tribe), and the fact that Shiloh, (the dwelling-place of the Ark for many generations), was in Ephraim, made all the tribes, excepting Judah, (and, generally, Benjamim), look up to it as their head.

Being humbled by Jephthah, who slew 42,000 of them for their insolence to him, Ephraim submitted to the judgeship of Samuel, though exercised in Benjamim, and having thus become accustomed to that tribe's supremacy, offered no resistance to the kingship of Saul. But, at his death, when David of *Judah*, was accepted by his tribe as king, the old jealousy flamed forth again, and Ephraim accordingly joined Ish-bosheth, and, of course, used their great influence over the other tribes, to bring "all Israel" over to the side of David's rival.

After Ish-bosheth's death, the men of Ephraim, with the rest of "Israel," submitted to David, and remained loyal, until Solomon's oppression, and Rehoboam's brutal threats, led them, at the instigation of Jeroboam, (himself of their tribe), to steps that ended in the Schism.

"*Benjamin*,"—naturally joined Ish-bosheth, because Saul was a Benjamite.

"*And over all Israel*,"—i.e. His dominion *finally* extended "over all Israel." It is clear from this verse that Ish-bosheth had to make his way gradually. Abner seems to have commenced operations on the East of Jordan, (choosing Mahanaim for capital), because David's name was less powerful there, than West of Jordan, and Ish-bosheth would be safer with the river between him and his rival. Step by step, however, Ish-bosheth's sway extended, until it embraced all the tribes save Judah.

The Philistines, who, just before David's accession to the throne, were virtually masters of the country, do not appear to have interfered in the settlement of the kingdom. Their sudden disappearance from the scene, after the crushing defeat of Saul, at Mount Gilboa, has given

rise to numerous ingenious, but unsatisfactory, theories. The simple truth appears to be, that they *approved* of the division that took place, for they must have foreseen that civil war would follow between David's, and Ish-bosheth's, party, and that, consequently, the country would be weakened,—a result most favourable for themselves. Moreover, the friendship of Achish, who was of weight amongst the Philistines, would, doubtless, have some influence in inducing his countrymen to abstain from hostilities against his old friend, David.

CHAPTER II.

v. 10. "*Ish-bosheth was forty years old.*"—"Thirty" would seem to be much more likely.

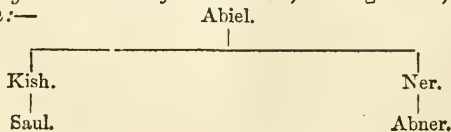
vs. 10, 11. "*Ish-bosheth reigned two years.*"—"And the time that David . . . and six months."—These passages seem to contradict one another. David became king of the whole country immediately on Ish-bosheth's death, *i.e.*, (according to the text), two years after succeeding to the throne of Judah; yet here he is represented as reigning, in Hebron, *over Judah, seven and a-half years.*

The simple explanation appears to be that David *did* reign in Hebron seven and a-half years, during *two years* of which he was *king of Judah* only, and that, after becoming *king of the whole country*, he continued to reign *in Hebron five years and a-half more*, at the end of which time he took Jerusalem, and changed his capital. The passage, as far as refers to David, properly translated, supports this view,—"*In Hebron he reigned seven years and six months, at first over the tribe of Judah only, and afterwards over all Israel.*"

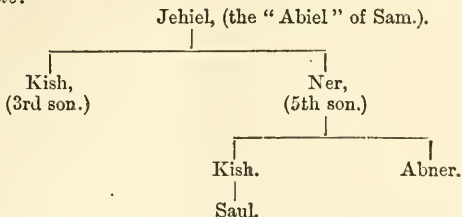
v. 12. "*Abner,*" = *Father of light.*—Ner was father of Abner, and of Kish (Saul's father): consequently Abner was *Saul's uncle.* He was, accordingly, naturally opposed to David.

GENEALOGY OF SAUL.

Pedigree as derived from I. Sam., making Abner, Saul's cousin:—



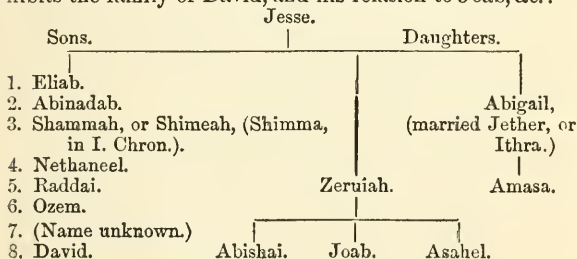
Pedigree as derived from I. Chron., making Abner, Saul's uncle:—



Abner was commander-in-chief of the army under Saul ; but he is scarcely noticed until after that monarch's death.

"*Went out*,"—with a view to reduce Judah to Ishbosheth's sway.

v. 13. "*Joab, the son of Zeruiah.*"—The following table exhibits the family of David, and his relation to Joab, &c.:—



The descent of David, from Judah to Jesse, on the father's side, was by the following steps:—

JUDAH, Pharez (by Tamar),—Hezron,—Ram,—Amminadab,—Nashon, "*prince of the children of Judah*,"—Salmon, (or Salma),—Boaz, (by Rahab "the harlot"),—Obed, (by Ruth),—Jesse.

It will be seen hence, that—

1. David, (as, of course, Christ), was descended from one of the most noble families of Judah.
2. Three of his ancestresses, (Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth), were Gentiles,—a significant fact as regards our Saviour, in whom Jew and Gentile would be alike blessed.

"Joab went out,"—to meet Abner.

"The pool of Gibeon."—"On the east side of the Hill of Gibeon, at the foot of a low cliff, was a large pool or tank, on either side of which the rival forces encamped."

v. 14. *"Let the young men now arise, and play before us."*—It was the custom in those days for champions from each army to stand forth, and challenge one another, and for a combat between these to precede the general engagement. These prefatory conflicts appear to have afforded great pleasure to the on-looking armies,—hence Abner's expression, "and play before us."

v. 16. *"They caught every one his fellow by the head,"*—by the hair of the head, i.e. either the hair on the scalp, or that forming the beard.

"Helkath-hazzurim," = *Field of Heroes.*

v. 18. *"Abishai"*—had, with his brothers, Joab, and Asahel, been zealous allies of David during his wanderings, and had acquired, in a special degree, his master's private confidence. He was the only companion of David when the latter entered Saul's camp at Ziph, and spared the King's life. The other particulars of his career will be found in the course of this book.

v. 21. *"Lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour."*—This may mean one of two things:—

1. Perhaps, Asahel, in his eager desire to overtake Abner, had cast off his armour, so as to run unimpeded. Abner, accordingly, urges him to arm himself, so as to be on even terms with him, should he overtake him.
2. Abner advises Asahel not to waste time in pursuing him; but to stop, and give himself to despoiling the slain, which would be more profitable to him.

This seems the more probable interpretation.

It may be remarked here, that *leaders of an army* were at liberty to strip the dead on the day of battle; the common soldiers not until the day following.

v. 22. *"How then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?"*—Abner knew that, if he slew Asahel, Joab would take upon himself the responsibility of Blood-vengeance, which always devolved upon the nearest male relative of

the slain person, and extended, it is thought, even to those killed in war, *if the slayer were known*.

v. 23. "*The hinder end of the spear*."—The spears of those times had a spike at the lower end, for the purpose of sticking them into the ground, on a halt. Thus we find Saul's spear "stuck in the ground, at his bolster," when David secretly entered his camp at Ziph. It was with the spike at the extremity of Abner's spear that Asahel was killed.

v. 27. "*As God liveth . . . his brother*."—Joab here, evidently, tells a wilful falsehood. He would, doubtless, have *continued* the pursuit, had not the Benjamites shewn themselves in force.

v. 29. "*Bithron*,"—means *a region of hills and valleys*; not any particular place.

CHAPTER III.

v. 2. "*Were sons born in Hebron*."—It would, then, appear that David had no children when he became king over Judah in Hebron; though some think that *Amnon and Chileab were born while David was in exile*, living amongst the Philistines, and that Absalom was the first son born to him after his becoming king. If this were so, the circumstance would, according to the ideas then regulating the succession, give Absalom a superior claim to Amnon and Chileab.

But the text seems to us so decisive in terms, as to altogether set aside the idea that any of David's children were born while he was still a private individual.

v. 3. "*Chileab*,"—called in Chronicles, *Daniel*. We read nothing more of him; he probably died before Absalom's rebellion.

At the time of David's accession to the throne of Judah, Ahinoam, and Abigail, were his only wives, (excepting Michal): the other four here mentioned he must have espoused at Hebron.

"*Talmai, king of Geshur*."—David's alliance with Talmai gave him valuable, and needful, support, in the N.

CHAPTER III. 1 : 6-end.

War continues between David's, and Ish-bosheth's, party, the former having the advantage. — Ish-bosheth offends Abner, who, in revenge, enters into negotiations with David to bring "Israel" over to him. — Abner comes to Hebron, and, after arranging with David the details of his proposed scheme, returns. — Joab deceitfully induces him to return, and slays him, in revenge for his brother Asahel's death.

v. 1. "*Long war*,"—lasting until the death of Ish-bosheth, and of a desultory character. That David grew stronger, and Ish-bosheth's cause weaker, is to be accounted for from the facts that "the skill and age of Abner could not prevail against the vigour and popular fame of David,"—and that the tribes supporting Ish-bosheth lost their enthusiasm for him, the more time they had to reflect upon David's claim.

v. 6. "*Made himself strong*,"—i.e. *lent all the weight of his influence*. Abner, on account of his relationship to Saul, his having been that king's commander-in-chief, and his own resolute and decided character, possessed great influence in Israel, and judiciously availed himself of the adverse feeling to Judah, existing in the other tribes, for the advantage of his family. He did not dare to propose himself as king; but put forth Ish-bosheth, a mere imbecile puppet, to *nominally* occupy that office, while he himself was the *virtual* ruler.

v. 7. "*Wherefore hast thou gone in . . . father's concubine*"?—It would hence appear that Abner had taken Rizpah into his harem. This was a step of great political significance, for, since the harem of a deceased monarch belonged of right to his successor, Abner's act might be construed into a claim to the throne. Probably, indeed, such *was* the case, for by this time Abner would have tolerably well established his authority.

v. 9. "*As the Lord hath sworn to David*."—Abner makes

his knowledge that God meant David to succeed Saul the reason for his going over to the side of the former, apparently overlooking the fact that this was a practical censure on his previous conduct in *opposing* David.

v. 12. "*Whose is the land,*"—i.e. "The land is virtually mine to bestow upon whomsoever I will."

v. 13. "*Except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter.*"—Michal was Saul's younger daughter, and originally loved David deeply. Having disappointed David of Merab, his elder daughter, Saul bestowed Michal upon him. She saved her husband by helping him to escape, by a window, when Saul had set a guard at his son-in-law's house,—and put a *teraph* in the bed, pretending it was David lying ill. When the deception was discovered, she declared to her father that David had compelled her to act thus, under threat of death. Saul afterwards cancelled the marriage, and gave Michal to Phaltiel. By the Law, a man must not re-take a divorced wife; but David *had* a right to resume cohabitation with Michal, for *she* had been divorced *without his consent*.

There seems no doubt that David's demand, for Michal to be restored to him, did not proceed from his affection, but was caused by policy,—for the possession of the late king's daughter, as wife, greatly strengthened his title in the eyes of the people. Her reproaches to him, and his reply to her, at the Removal of the Ark, together with his subsequent neglect of her, show that, whatever love they might once have felt for one another, *she* loathed *him*, and *he*, (now secure on his throne, and so no longer needing her), was perfectly indifferent to her.

v. 14. "*Which I espoused . . . Philistines.*"—Saul, having heard of Michal's passion for David, conceived a plan whereby he might make his daughter a decoy to lure David to his death. Accordingly, he proffered him Michal as wife, on condition of slaying one hundred Philistines, "thinking to make David fall by" their "hand." David, however, slew double the number exacted, escaped uninjured, and received Michal.

v. 17. "*The Elders of Israel,*"—the National Assembly. It consisted of the Princes of the Tribes, Heads of Clans and Families, and the "Officers and Judges."

"*Ye sought for David . . . over you.*"—This must refer to the time when all Israel groaned under Saul's mis-

government, for we have no record of there being any general longing for David's accession upon the death of Saul.

v. 18. "*For the Lord . . . enemies.*"—We have it nowhere recorded that this special promise was made on the present, or any other, occasion, about David. Abner gives it in very vague terms, and does not indicate when, or to whom, the pledge had been given. The fact appears to be that he himself concocted the message to account for his own tergiversation, and to bring over Israel to David. In thus speaking, however, he can scarcely be accused of falsehood, since the promise which he attributes to Jehovah does most certainly express what He had manifested openly to be his purpose with regard to David.

No words could be conceived as better calculated to win the tribes over to the cause of David, for they had, under Saul, suffered bitterly from their enemies, especially the Philistines,—Ish-bosheth gave no promise of being able to cope with their foes in case of war,—and, therefore, the prospect of being governed by a king of whose bravery and past successes they were cognizant, and for whose future victories, (bringing complete deliverance to the country), Jehovah had, (according to Abner), pledged himself, offered the highest inducement to submit to "the son of Jesse."

v. 22. "*Came . . . with them.*"—Probably this foray was made upon the Amalekites.

v. 25. "*Thy going out, and thy coming in,*"—i.e. David's surroundings, circumstances, habits, and acts.

v. 30. "*Joab and Abishai slew Abner.*"—The narrative does not state distinctly that *Abishai* was present at the deed: if he was *not*, he must be associated here with Joab, because he was privy to the scheme.

"*Because he had slain . . . battle.*"—This was the main reason, perhaps; but jealousy of Abner's influence over David, and fear that the new adherent would supplant him in that monarch's favour, also moved Joab.

Joab's conduct in slaying Abner is completely unjustifiable, even on the principles of blood-feud, for even if the claim of blood-revenge extended to the case of those slain in battle, yet "Abner had killed Asahel most reluctantly, and only to save his own life."

v. 31. "*David said to Joab . . . Abner.*"—David thus punished Joab by compelling him to attend as a mourner, at the bier of Abner.

"*Sackcloth*,"—hair-cloth.

"*Bier*,"—a *bed*-like bier is signified in the original. The poor would seem to have been conveyed to the tomb on biers somewhat like hand-barrows, and the wealthy on rich bedsteads, of the four-post kind: on one of the latter Abner was probably carried.

vs. 33, 34. David's Lament over Abner would be better rendered thus:

"*Should Abner die as a villain dies?*

Thy hands—not bound,

Thy feet—not brought into fetters:

As one falls before the sons of wickedness, fellest thou!"

The point of the Lament lies in the manner in which Abner was slain. Joab professed to slay him in the capacity of Blood-avenger. But in that case Abner should, if found guilty, have been delivered up to Joab by the judges, *bound hand and foot*. But Joab, while professing "to exercise the avenger's right, took a lawless and private mode of satisfaction, and committed a murder," so that Abner "was treacherously stabbed like a worthless fellow by the hands of an assassin."

v. 35. "Till the sun be down."—Eastern fasts do not consist in keeping from any particular article of diet; but in perfect abstinence during the day.

PART II.

CHAPTER IV.; V., 1-5.

Ish-bosheth slain.—David made King over all Israel.

CHAPTER IV.

v. 1. "Saul's Son,"—Ish-bosheth.

"*The Israelites*,"—in the restricted sense of *all the tribes but Judah*.

v. 2. "Captains of bands,"—commanders of divisions of Ish-bosheth's body-guard.

"*A Beerothite*."—*Beeroth* was one of the Hivite cities in confederacy with Gibeon, which, by craft, obtained a league with Joshua.

v. 3. "Gittaim,"—the Gittites, or inhabitants of Gath.

"*The Beerothites fled to Gittaim.*"—We have no record as to when this incident occurred. It may have been—

1. In Joshua's time, in order to escape being made "hewers of wood," &c., or—

2. When, later on, Saul broke the league made by Joshua with the Gibeonites, and slaughtered a number of them.

v. 4. "*The tidings,*"—of the Israelites' defeat at Mount Gilboa.

v. 5. "*Bed,*"—probably the *divan*, which consisted of a cushion placed close to the wall, on the floor, or on a bench raised slightly above the floor,—with other cushions behind to support the back.

"*Who lay . . . at noon.*"—He was taking the daily *siesta*, usual in the East.

v. 6. "*They came thither . . . wheat.*"—They entered the central court of the house, where the grain was heaped, under pretence of being about to carry some of it away, and, having thus obtained access to the house, gained the room where Ish-bosheth reposed; this was, probably, the "chamber above the gate."

v. 7. "*The Plain,*"—of the Jordan.

v. 10. "*One told me.*"—David here refers to the Amalekite, whose false account of Saul's death, &c., are given in the early part of this book.

v. 11. "*A righteous . . . house.*"—David here contrasts, by implication, the assumed deed of the Amalekite, and that actually committed by these two men. *Saul* was a wicked, *Ish-bosheth*, a righteous, man: *Saul*, (according to the Amalekite), was slain at his own request, to save him the indignity of falling by the hand of the pursuing enemy; *Ish-bosheth* fell a victim to stealthy and cold-blooded murder.

v. 12. "*Cut off . . . feet.*"—It was formerly customary to retaliate a crime on the member committing it. In this case the assassins' feet had entered the chamber, and their hands had committed the murder: hence those members were cut off.

CHAPTER V.

v. 1. "*All the tribes of Israel,*"—including Judah.

I. Chron. gives a detailed account of those who thus came to David:—

- Of *Judah*, "bearing shield and spear" . . . 6,800.
 „ *Simeon*, "mighty men of valour" . . . 7,100.
 „ *Levi* 4,600.
 „ the *Aaronites* 3,700.
 (Benaiah was their leader, and had with him
 Zadok, and 22 captains of the house of
 Zadok's father.)
 „ *Benjamin*, "the kindred of Saul" . . . 3,000
 ("Hitherto the greatest part of them had kept
 the ward of the house of Saul.")
 „ *Ephraim*, "mighty men of valour, famous through-
 out the house of their fathers" . . 20,800.
 „ *Manasseh*, W. of Jordan 18,000.
 (These "were expressed by name, to come and
 make David king.")
 „ *Issachar* 200
 "heads; and all their brethren were at their
 commandment."
 (These representatives of Issachar "were men
 that had understanding of the times, to know
 what Israel ought to do.")
 „ *Zebulun*, "expert in war, with all instruments of
 war" 50,000.
 [These "could *keep rank*," (should be "came to
 assist"), and "were not of double heart."]
 „ *Naphtali*, "with shield and spear" . . . 37,000,
 and 100 captains.
 „ *Dan*, "expert in war" 28,000.
 „ *Asher*, "expert in war" 40,000.
 „ the *Tribes E. of Jordan*, "with all manner of in-
 struments of war for the battle" . . 120,000.

These warriors, over 300,000 in number, "ready armed to the war," "came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel."

"And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them. Moreover they that were nigh them, even unto Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly: for there was joy in Israel."

v. 2. "*Thou wast he . . . Israel.*"—He had been Saul's generalissimo.

"*The Lord said . . . over Israel.*"—There is no promise of God to David recorded in Scripture in these words; but, as was pointed out in the case of Abner's speech, the whole tenor of God's dealings with David was to the same effect as the words of the text.

"*A Captain over Israel,*"—in I. Chron., "*ruler over my people Israel.*"

v. 3. "*David made . . . the Lord.*"—This was, virtually, a coronation-oath. We find that, at Saul's election, Samuel wrote "the manner of the Kingdom" in a book, and laid it up before the Lord. This "book" seems to have defined the rights, and the limitations, of the Kingly power, and David's "oath," no doubt, consisted of a promise to govern in accordance with these. This pledge does not seem to have been exacted from those sovereigns who succeeded in regular hereditary descent, for we read of it at the accession of only three monarchs:—Saul, the first King,—David, the founder of a new dynasty,—Joash, who succeeded after a usurpation. The people seem, however, to have had the right to demand fresh stipulations from a monarch, at his accession, as in the case of Rehoboam, whose refusal of the demands made upon him issued in the Schism.

David had now a two-fold right to the throne:—

1. God had appointed him.

2. The whole people had chosen him.

"*They anointed David,*"—his third, (and second *public*) unction.

CHAPTER V. 6-16.

David takes Jerusalem from the Jebusites,—and builds himself a Palace on Mount Zion, Hiram aiding him with materials and workmen.—David feels himself established in the kingdom.—He takes more wives and concubines,—Names of Sons born to him at Jerusalem.

v. 6. "*The Jebusites,*"—were of the old inhabitants of the land. Joshua conquered, and slew, the *King* of Jebus,

or Jerusalem, with others; but had not taken the *city*. At the division of the land, the boundary-line between Judah and Benjamin passed through Jerusalem in such a manner as to give the *Upper City*, or *Fortress of the Jebusites*, on Mount Zion, to Judah, and the *Lower City*, on Mount Acra, (together with Mount Moriah,) to Benjamin.

From Judges we learn that, after Joshua's death, Judah took Jerusalem, smote it with the edge of the sword, and set it on fire.

It is, however, stated, in Joshua, that Judah could not drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, but dwelt amongst them, and, in Judges, a like statement is made about the Benjamites. The simple explanation of these three statements would seem to be that Judah, and Benjamin, uniting their forces, took the *Lower City*; but that all efforts, on the part of the two tribes, united, or acting separately, failed to capture the *Upper City*.

The Lower City, also, seems to have fallen again into the power of the Jebusites, and to have remained in their possession until David captured the whole city.

David's reasons for transferring the capital of the kingdom from Hebron to Jerusalem were, apparently:—

1. Jerusalem, while in his own tribe, (where he had most power), was more central than Hebron, and as near to the other tribes as any city of Judah could be.

2. The new capital was almost impregnable situated.

It would seem that a more central capital, (situated, *e.g.* on the site of Samaria,) would have been a wiser choice; but David was, doubtless, Divinely directed, since Jehovah chose Moriah as the site of the national temple, and thus brought it about that, when the schism occurred, the Capital and the Temple should be together in the kingdom of Judah.

"*Jerusalem*,"—is mentioned, under the name of *Salem*, in connection with its king Melchi-zedek. From the *Jebusites*, it afterwards was called *Jebus*. These two words compounded gave "*Jerusalem*" = "*habitation of peace*," an appellation describing what its position actually rendered it, and prophetic of its being, in the future, the seat of the national worship.

At what period the name "*Jerusalem*" began to be given it is uncertain; it is first applied to it in *Scripture*,

in Joshua. Some think this is written by anticipation,—that the City was called "*Jebus*," up to the time of its capture by *David*, who conferred upon it the name it now bears.

Jerusalem was built, originally, on two hills,—*Zion*, on the S., and *Acra*, on the N.: to these were afterwards added *Moriah*, on the E., and *Bezetha*, on the N., of *Acra*.

(*N.B.*—As full a verbal description of Jerusalem as is needed in this book may be collected from the Notes on the present passage: but the student should be able, also, to draw a Plan of the City: consequently, at the end of the "*Geography of II. Samuel*" a list is given of what should constitute such a plan.)

v. 6. "*Except . . . hither.*"—So secure did they consider themselves, that they manned the battlements with only the blind and the lame.

v. 7. "*The stronghold of Zion*,"—was on the hill of *Zion* on the South, and was the *Upper City*, or *Stronghold of the Jebusites*. It is called in I. Chron. "*the Castle of Zion*."

"*The same is . . . David.*"—This was the name by which *David* afterwards called it, when he had built his palace on it.

v. 8. "*Whosoever getteth . . . up into the house.*"—The parallel in *Chronicles* states that *Joab* was the first to enter, and that he was, consequently, made generalissimo of *David's* forces. But *Joab* already held this post, so that he was now only confirmed in it. *David's* motive in making the offer seems to have arisen from a hope that someone else than *Joab* would accomplish the feat, and so supersede him in the command.

This passage is very wrongly translated, conveying no definite idea of *how* the city was entered by *Joab*, &c. The correct translation seems to be, "*Whosoever getteth up the secret passage, and smiteth the Jebusites, even the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, (because the lame and the blind had said, He shall not come into this house,) shall be chief captain.*"

(Probably, the lame and blind placed, in mockery, on the battlements, amused themselves by crying aloud, "*He shall not come into this house,*" and so annoyed *David* by their taunts, that he is here said to have "*hated*" them.

"*Gutter*."—The corresponding Hebrew word is found in only one other place in Scripture, (viz., Ps. xiii. 8,) where it is rendered "*water-spout*."

Josephus says it was through a subterranean passage that Joab obtained access to the City. Many authorities render it "*secret passage*."

It is, then, most probable that the "*gutter*" was a *disused, or then dry, conduit, leading into Jerusalem*.

Some make Joab scale the steep ascent of the fortress. This is very improbable. It would be almost impossible for this achievement to be wrought *now*; much less could it be accomplished at a time when the science of war was so rude, and siege appliances so inadequate.

v. 9. "*Millo*,"—was, probably, the rampart of the citadel. I. Chron. says that, "*Joab repaired the rest of the City*."

v. 11. "*Hiram . . . to David*."—It was to Hiram's interest to cultivate the "friendship of whatever power commanded the great lines of inland traffic which ran through Cœle-Syria and Damascus, by Hamath and Tadmor, to the Euphrates."

This route was now in David's hands. It was also most profitable for the Phœnicians to be in league with the Israelites for the sake of the commerce with the latter themselves: this, owing to "the security of cultivation enjoyed by the Israelites," under David and Solomon, speedily became most flourishing.

That Hiram should send *artificers* to David is not strange, for the Philistines had, under Saul, deprived the Israelites of their implements and forges, so that the mechanical arts must have fallen into a very low state.

vs. 14-16. Two other lists of David's children born at Jerusalem are given in I. Chron. They differ from the account in the text thus:—

1. *Shammuah* is called *Shimea*, or *Shammua*.
2. *Elishua* is called *Elishua*, or *Elishama*.
3. *Eliada* is called *Eliada*, or *Beeliada*.
4. *Eliphalet* is called *Eliphalet*, or *Eliphelet*.
5. *The text gives the names of eleven children*; the lists in I. Chron. mention thirteen,—the two additional ones being *Eliphalet*, or *Elpalet*; and *Nogah*.
6. One of the accounts in Chron. states that
 - (1.) Bath-shua, (Bath-sheba), was the mother of Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon.

- (2.) Besides these children there were born to him, at Jerusalem, *Tamar*, and "the sons of the concubines."

Psalm CI. seems to have been composed by David on the occasion of his becoming settled over the whole Kingdom.

CHAPTER V. 17-end.

David twice defeats the Philistines, in the Valley of Rephaim.

The parallel narrative in I. Chron. adds,—“And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations.”

v. 17. “*When the Philistines . . . over Israel.*”—It has been already shewn why the Philistines left David unmolested as King of Judah only. Now, however, that Israel and Judah were united under his rule, they naturally felt alarm for their safety, and accordingly took the field against David, with a view to reduce him to the same state of subjection in which they had formerly held Saul.

“*The hold,*”—the stronghold of Zion.

v. 18. “*The Valley of Rephaim,*”—extended from the W. of Jerusalem, half-way to Bethlehem.

“*Rephaim*” = giants.

v. 20. “*Baal-perazim*” = the Plain of Bursts, or of Destruction.

v. 21. “*Images.*”—I. Chron. gives, in the parallel passage, “*gods.*”

v. 24. “*Mulberry trees,*”—in the Hebrew, *Becain*. A large shrub, called by the Arabs *Baca*, would seem to be here meant, “not only from the identity of name, but because it distils an odoriferous gum; which seems to be implied in the literal meaning of the original, which is ‘weepings.’”

The word occurs in the singular, in Ps. lxxxiv. 6, and is there translated as a proper name,—“Who passing through the valley of *Baca*,” &c.

“*A going,*”—i.e., a rustling motion.

v. 25. “*Geba,*”—“*Gibeon*” in the parallel in I. Chron.

Both were in Benjamim, and not far apart.

CHAPTER VI.

The Ark taken by David from Kirjath-Jearim,
—Uzzah smitten for touching it on the way,
—David, in fear, has it carried aside into
the house of Obed-Edom, to whom it brings
God's blessing,—The King, learning this,
causes it to be carried, with sacrifices and
rejoicing, from Obed-Edom's house to "the
City of David," and to be placed in the
tabernacle he has prepared for it,—Michal
taunts David for dancing before the Ark.

The account of these events is much more fully given in I. Chron. The following are some of the additional particulars there recorded, the remainder being incorporated in the Notes on the Text:—

Before removing the Ark from Kirjath-jearim, David consulted the "Congregation of Israel," proposing to assemble, at the solemn rite, representatives from all the tribes, together with the priests and Levites, from their several cities.

The Congregation agreeing to the King's plan, delegates were sent from every part of the land, and assembled at Kirjath.

When about to take the Ark out of the house of Obed-edom, David again assembled, at Jerusalem, representatives from "all Israel," to assist at the Second Removal. Believing that God's anger, as shewn in the smiting of Uzzah, had been owing to the Ark not having been carried by the Levites, (that office, and the conveyance of the sacred vessels, having been assigned to the Kohathites, in the Law), and to the neglect of proper preparatory purifications, David now took particular care to assemble Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, and 862 Levites, of the families of Kohath, Gershom, and Merari.

By the King's command, the priests, and Levites, sanctified themselves for the ceremony, and the Ark was carried forth on the shoulders of the Levites.

v. 1. "*All the chosen men of Israel*,"—i.e. delegates from throughout the country, as related in I. Chron.

v. 2. "*Baale*,"—the same as Kirjath-jearim. It was called, also, *Baalah*, and *Kirjath-Baal*. The "*Baal*," in the name, seems to indicate its having originally been a seat of idolatrous worship.

"*To bring up from thence the Ark of God*."—The Ark had been taken, in battle, by the Philistines, B.C. 1141. It was then placed first in the Temple of Dagon, at Ashdod. The image of that deity falling broken before it, and the Ashdodites being plagued for its possession, it was sent to Gath, and thence to Ekron, the plague still accompanying it. Thereupon, the Philistines, after holding possession of it seven months, determined to send back the Ark to the Israelites, with a Trespass-offering of five golden emerods, and five golden mice. They placed it on a new cart, drawn by two kine, which, of their own accord, drew it to Beth-shemesh. The men of that place, rejoicing at the restoration of the precious coffer, offered the kine in sacrifice; but a large number of them being smitten for looking into it, they sent to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, (which was the nearest town on the road to Shiloh, where the Tabernacle then stood), to remove it to their city. They complied,—brought it up from Beth-shemesh,—and placed it in the house of Abinadab, a Levite, whose son Eleazar was sanctified to keep it.

It was not taken to Shiloh, because, probably, that place was desolated, soon after the Philistines captured the Ark.

It is almost certain that it had remained at Kirjath-jearim until David removed it; though some authorities are of opinion that, during part of Saul's reign, it was at Nob, whence it was again removed to Baalah.

"*Whose name . . . cherubims*,"—i.e. The Ark was called the "*Ark of God*," from the fact of the Shechinah, or token of Jehovah's presence, resting upon the cover of the Coffer, (or *Mercy-Seat*), between the cherubim.

The Cherubim were two images of beaten gold, one at each end of the Ark,—the one facing the other,—and

having outstretched wings, veiling the Mercy-Seat, and eyes cast down as if desiring to look into its mysteries.

v. 3. "*They set the Ark of God upon a new cart,*"—in imitation of the manner in which the Philistines had formerly caused it to be carried.

This removal of the Ark was carried out in a manner directly opposed to the precepts of the Law, which forbade it to be placed on a cart, or drawn by animals, or handled by its bearers. It was ordered to be carried on the shoulders of the Kohathites, by means of two staves passing through rings at the corners, while, before its removal, it, (together with all the vessels of the Sanctuary), was to have its covering placed over it by the priests. Any other person touching it incurred the penalty of death!

The Philistines had, in *their* manner of sending it back, infringed the Law; but their conduct was excusable, for they were, doubtless, ignorant of the rules for conveying it, and, had it *not* been so, they *could not* have secured the services of Levite bearers.

David, and those with him, however, *ought* to have known what the rule was, especially after the terrible judgment upon the men of Beth-shemesh.

"*In Gibeah,*"—should be, "*on a hill*": Abinadab dwelt at Kirjath-jearim.

v. 5. "*Harp,*"—a kind of light, portable *lyre*: it was, probably, seven-stringed, and was the national musical instrument of the Hebrews.

"*Psaltery,*"—a large, heavy, instrument, of the harp kind; probably, triangular in form, and, according to Josephus, twelve-stringed.

"*Timbrel,*" (frequently rendered "*tabret*"),—a species of tambourine.

"*Cornets,*"—*horns*: those of the ox, and the ram, were the ones generally used.

"*Cymbals.*"—Under this generic name were included cymbals proper, (such as are still used in bands),—castanets,—the *sistrum*, (a "frame of sonorous metal" crossed by bars of the same material, which passed loosely through holes in the sides, and were bent at the ends, and which, when the instrument was shaken, produced the sound),—and a kind of "triangle."

v. 6. "*Nachon,*"—in I. Chron. is called *Chidon*.

"*Uzzah put forth . . . hold of it,*"—thus flatly

violating the precept just referred to, and so incurring the death penalty.

"*Shook it*,"—owing, as we learn from I. Chron., to their *stumbling*.

v. 8. "*Perez-Uzzah*" = *the breaking, (or disaster), of Uzzah*. Perez-Uzzah, and, consequently, Obed-edom's house, were close to Jerusalem,—if not actually *within* the Lower City.

v. 9. "*David was afraid of the Lord*."—David evidently regarded the judgment on Uzzah as harshly severe, though, as we learn from Chron., he afterwards owned its justice, as a punishment for not seeking God "after the due order." It seems pretty clear that he was blind to the cause of the "breach," at the time of its occurrence. During the latter years of Saul's reign, and the earlier ones of David's, there would appear to have been a general ignorance, and carelessness regarding matters of religion; and thus we find the King himself, the priests, and the Levites, displaying "a zeal without knowledge,"—and actually contravening the Law, while eagerly intent on re-establishing the Tabernacle worship of Jehovah.

The judgment upon Uzzah was just, since, being in charge of the Ark, it was his duty, as a Levite, to have seen that all things were done "decently, and in order": this he neglected, and, consequently, he was accountable for the accident which led him to touch the Ark. Such an example, too, was necessary, to check "the growing disposition to treat the holy mysteries with undue familiarity."

v. 10. "*The Gittite*,"—i.e. a native of Gath-rimmon, which was a town of Southern Dan, belonging to the Kohathite Levites, of whom Obed-edom was one.

v. 12. "*So David went . . . gladness*."—From the parallel passage in I. Chron. we gain the following additional particulars concerning the procession:—

David instructed "the chief of the Levites" to choose from their brethren singers and musicians.

Accordingly they appointed a number of instrumentalists, under the direction of Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, (or Jeduthun); and singers under Chenaniah. (Some, however, regard the passage concerning Chenaniah as mistranslated; and would make him *the superintendent of the carrying of the Ark*,—not *leader of song*.)

Obed-edom, and three other Levites, acted as "*door-keepers*" to the Ark, during its transit.

v. 13. "*When they . . . six paces.*"—I. Chron. has, "*When God helped the Levites that bare the ark.*"—It would appear, then, that, when the Levites had advanced six paces, some token of Divine approval was vouchsafed them.

"*Oxen and fatlings.*"—I. Chron. has, "seven bullocks, and seven rams."

v. 14. "*David danced,*"—(and, as I. Chron. tells us, "*played,*"—i.e., on his lyre).

Dancing did not form any part of Jewish worship, (as it did amongst many other ancient nations); but was, with the Hebrews, a mode of expressing gladness and rejoicing on special occasions, some of which would, of course, be religious ones. David's dancing, then, was merely an expression of his exultation.

"*David was girded with a linen ephod,*"—So, also, were the Levites, and the musicians, (as I. Chron. records).

"*Ephod,*"—from *aphad* = *to tie*,—because fastened by a girdle.

There were two kinds of ephod:—

1. *The ephod peculiar to the High Priest*,—a close robe, reaching from the shoulders to the loins,—made of fine-twined linen, gorgeously embroidered with blue, purple, scarlet, and strips of gold (sewn on). On the shoulder-pieces, set in golden sockets, were two onyx stones, bearing the names of the twelve tribes,—six on each stone.

It was fastened round the waist by a girdle of the same materials of which it was itself composed.

2. *The ephod of the ordinary Priests and Levites*,—a tunic of plain linen. The Priests and Levites did not, at first, wear Ephods; but we find them gradually adopting their use, and, at length, (as in the present case of David), they came to be used by even private individuals, on solemn occasions.

v. 15. "*All the house of Israel,*"—i.e., the Priests and Levites, and delegates from all the Tribes, (consisting, according to I. Chron., of "the Elders of Israel, and the Captains over Thousands.")

"*Brought up,*"—i.e., up the path leading to the summit of Mount Zion.

"*Trumpet.*"—The Hebrew trumpet was a long, straight, instrument, in form resembling its modern representative. David was the first to introduce the trumpet into choir

music: before which, it had, (like the "horn"), been used only to make signals, during religious festivals, or on the battle-field.

The trumpet, horn, and Miriam's timbrel, are the only instruments noticed in the *Pentateuch*.

I. Chron. states that, on the occasion of the text, there were *seven priests* who, advancing "before the Ark," blew *with trumpets*; and that, besides these instruments, the musicians accompanied the procession with the sound of cornets, cymbals, psalteries, and harps.

It is most probable that the trumpets did not join in the general concert, but were blown by the priests during the pauses of the singing, and the playing of the other instruments.

v. 16. "*Despised him.*"—Michal's idea of kingly dignity was derived, probably, from her stern father, Saul. She would, consequently, feel contempt for David's eager, sympathetic, disposition, which led him generally to act naturally, and without affectation, on the spur of the moment. Besides, she had been used to see her father treat the priests with an air of lofty preëminence, and so was chagrined at David thus, (as she considered it), humiliating himself before them.

v. 17. "*The tabernacle that David had pitched for it,*"—not the old Tabernacle of Moses; but a new one, specially erected, at Jerusalem, for the Ark's reception.

The original Tabernacle was, (as we learn from I. Chron.,) still at Gibeon, at the time of the staying of the pestilence at the threshing-floor of Araunah: it seems then to have contained only the Altar of Burnt-Offering. Solomon is recorded to have offered 1,000 burnt-offerings at the old Tabernacle. After this we meet with no mention of it.

"*David offered . . . peace-offerings.*"—This was contrary to the *letter* of the Law, which provided that no sacrifices should be offered anywhere excepting before the Tabernacle,—the reason for this command being that that structure was the dwelling-place of Jehovah. But as the Ark, (the token of the Lord's presence), was now in the *new* Tabernacle, there was no violation of the *spirit* of the Law, in these sacrifices. Of course, David himself did not officiate at them: Abiathar and Zadok, the representatives of the Aaronic family, would minister, aided by the other priests present.

We learn from I. Chron., that—

1. When the New Tabernacle had received the Ark, David appointed, to offer continual praise before the latter, a band of performers on psalteries, harps, and cymbals, under the leadership of Asaph; and two priests, to sound with trumpets.
2. On that same day, David delivered into the hand of Asaph, and his brethren, a Psalm of Thanksgiving,—probably *the first Psalm he wrote for public praise.*

(It is given in I. Chron. xvi. 8-36, inclusive, and appears to have been compounded, by David, of portions of three already existing Psalms of his; viz. xcvi., cv., cvi.)

At the conclusion of this song, "All the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord."

3. David leaving, in all, sixty-eight priests and Levites, to minister before the Ark, in Jerusalem, (Obed-edom and Hosah being appointed porters), set apart for the service of *the* Tabernacle, at Gibeon, Zadok, and the remaining Priests, to sacrifice,—and the rest of the musicians, under Heman and Jeduthun, to offer praise, (Jeduthun's sons being appointed porters).

v. 19. "*A good piece of flesh*,"—the sixth part of a bullock, according to the Rabbins.

"*Of flesh*,"—is not in the original here; but is so in the parallel passage in I. Chron. The etymology of the Hebrew there employed is two words, meaning *fire* and *bull*,—whence, perhaps, the best rendering would be "*roast-beef*."

"*A flagon of wine*,"—"Of wine" is not in the original here, or in the parallel in I. Chron., and "*flagon*" is an incorrect rendering of a word signifying *some species of cake*. The Septuagint has, in the text, "*pancake*," and in Chron., "*honey-cake*." It is most probable, then, that *some kind of sweet cake, cooked in the frying-pan*, is intended.

v. 20. "*Uncovered himself*,"—is a very incorrect translation, leading one to imagine that David acted indecorously on this occasion,—an idea strengthened by the use of the word "*shamelessly*," which is not in the original. So far from David's being *without attire*, we are distinctly told that *he wore a linen robe, and an Ephod*.

If we translate the word here rendered "*uncovered*," correctly, we shall read "*shewed himself openly*."

Then, omitting "*shamelessly*," and remembering that it was for his "*leaping and dancing*" that Michal despised David, her meaning becomes apparent ;—she sarcastically taunts him with forgetting his regal dignity, and, *by making a public exhibition of himself*, lowering himself to the level of the mob, (or "*the vain fellows*").

v. 22. "*And I will yet . . . own sight*."—David's meaning is, "Considering how God has exalted me, I am prepared to humiliate myself to a far deeper pitch than you say I have to-day done."

v. 23. "*Michal . . . had no child unto the day of her death*."—David, doubtless, retained her in his harem ; but saw her no more,—thus lowering her, as he had said he would, in the estimation of the "*handmaids*."

In commemoration of the removal of the Ark from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem, David composed the following Psalms:—xv. ; xlvii., lxviii. (both sung, probably, during the Removal) ; and lxvii. (perhaps forming the "Blessing," wherewith David blessed the people, after the Ark had reached its destination).

Subsequent History of the Ark.

It was placed in the Holy of Holies, in Solomon's Temple, where it remained till the Sanctuary was polluted by the presence of idols : the priests then carried it from place to place, to preserve it from profanation.

Josiah replaced it in the Temple.

It was lost sight of at the Destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and was wanting in the Second Temple. The Jews, however, believe that it still exists.

CHAPTER VII.

David purposes to build a House for the Ark,
—Nathan at first encourages him, but afterwards, by Divine instruction, forbids him, while conveying to him God's promise that

his son shall erect the House, and that his throne shall be established for ever,—
David's Thanksgiving Prayer thereupon.

Most authorities consider that the events of this chapter immediately follow the account of the Removal of the Ark, only because related in subject, and forming the sequel, to that incident; and that they *actually* belong to a much later period than their present position would lead us to suppose. The reasons they allege for this view are:—

1. David cannot be said to have had "rest from *all* his enemies" until, at least, the fall of Rabbah, 1033, B.C.
2. David declares, whilst relating, (in his dying charge), his design of building a House for God, and the latter's forbidding him, that Jehovah distinctly said, "*Solomon*, thy son, he shall build my house," (I. Chron.) Consequently, the veto on the King's plan must have been laid after the birth of Solomon, which took place in 1033 B.C.

Others, however, maintain that the chapter occupies its proper chronological position, and reply to the above arguments thus:—

1. David certainly *had* rest, at the time of the Removal of the Ark, from all who had been his enemies so far since his accession, *viz.*, Saul's former adherents; the Jebusites; and the Philistines.
2. He does not state that it was on the special occasion of the text that Jehovah mentioned "*Solomon*" *by name*. It may be that—as v. 12 of this chapter has it—God only promised that *one of David's "seed"* should build the House, without *naming* him: and that the mention of "*Solomon*" was made in the renewal of the promise after the latter's birth

The latter view appears to be correct.

v. 3. "*Go! do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee.*"—Presently, we find the Lord instructing Nathan to *forbid* David's doing what was in his heart: we must, consequently, regard the encouraging words of the text as being the prophet's *uninspired opinion*. The design of David to build Jehovah a permanent house seemed to him so good and pious, that the idea of the possibility of its

being disapproved of by God does not appear to have occurred to him for a moment.

v. 5. "*Shalt thou build me an house?*"—A strong negative, equivalent to "*Thou shalt by no means build me a house.*"

v. 6. "*In a tent, and in a tabernacle.*"—It would appear hence that it was not an absolute necessity that the Ark should abide in the Tabernacle only, so that there was nothing wrong in David's placing it in a temporary "tent" at Jerusalem, until God should reveal His will concerning it.

v. 7. "*Tribes of Israel.*"—"Judges of Israel" is the expression in the parallel passage in I. Chron.

v. 8. "*Sheep-cote,*"—the *sheep-fold*. As a rule the flocks of a settled people, in the E., are folded at night only when pasturing away from home, and in places where nomad robbers or beasts of prey are to be feared. The "folds" are either strongly-built open enclosures, or high, covered, impregnable, towers.

v. 10. "*I will appoint . . . over my people Israel,*"—a promise of security and peace to the nation, which was not fulfilled, because Israel kept not the condition,—viz., obedience.

v. 11. "*He will make thee an house.*"—The emphasis here should be on "*He*" and "*thee*,"—the force of the passage being, "Do not imagine that the Lord, in refusing to allow *thee* to carry out thy design of building Him a house, intimates that He has withdrawn His blessing from thee. He will keep His covenant with thee, and carry to perfection the gracious designs He has had in view for thee ever since calling thee from the sheep-fold,—so that, though *thou* shalt not build *Him* a house, (of stone, wood, &c.), yet *He* will make *thee* a house, (i.e., a dynasty)."

v. 12. "*Thy seed,*"—Solomon.

vs. 13, 16. "*I will 'stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.*" "*Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.*"—Here is a promise that the dynasty of David, and of his son Solomon, should endure "*for ever.*"

Literally, the promise has not been fulfilled, for the Jews are no longer a nation governed by a prince of the line of David and Solomon. But God has not, therefore, broken His covenant. The promise was not *absolute*, but *con-*

tingent upon certain terms being observed on the other side. These conditions David himself declares in his farewell charge,—“And he said unto me, ‘I will establish his, (i.e., Solomon’s), kingdom for ever, *if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments.*’”

Solomon violated these conditions, and Jehovah, therefore, kept not *His* part of the covenant.

Figuratively and spiritually this promise has been fulfilled,—for Christ, of the seed of David, and of Solomon, reigns, and shall for ever reign, over the Church, the spiritual Israel.

v. 14. “*If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men.*”—Solomon *did* commit iniquity: and God *did* chasten him as foretold, by “*stirring up,*” as “*adversaries,*” to vex his later years, Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam.

v. 15. “*But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.*”—This promise was fulfilled, for whereas the whole kingdom was taken from Saul’s dynasty, Judah, (with Benjamim), was left to Solomon’s son, and the line of David continued to reign over that kingdom long after Israel had gone into captivity.

The chief reason of God’s forbidding David to build Him an house is not stated in the text; David, however, supplies it in his farewell charge,—“But God said unto me, ‘Thou shalt not build an house for my name, *because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.*’” (I. Chron. xxviii. 3.)

v. 18. “*Went in,*”—either to a private room of his palace, or to the Tabernacle containing the Ark, at Jerusalem.

“*Sat before the Lord.*”—The posture here called “*sitting*” was assumed by kneeling down, and letting the body rest on the heels. This is still, in the E., an attitude of profoundest devotion.

v. 20. “*Say more unto thee?*”—I. Chron adds, “for the honour of thy servant?” The whole meaning is, “What farther can I say to shew how deeply grateful I am for the great and undeserved honour Thou hast bestowed upon me?”

“*And let thy name be magnified for ever,*”—i.e. in the fulfilment of the promises to establish David’s house.

I. Chron. reads it so;—"Do as thou hast said. Let it, (*i.e.* my house), even be established, *that* thy name may be magnified for ever."

CHAPTER VIII., 1-14.

David subdues the Philistines, and the Moabites, —conquers Hadadezer of Zobah, and the Syrians of Damascus, reducing the latter to submission, and placing garrisons in their towns.—Toi sends his son, with presents, to David, to congratulate him on his victory over Hadadezer; David dedicates, to God, Toi's gifts, and spoils which he has taken in his wars.—The Edomites defeated, reduced to servitude, and their towns garrisoned with Hebrews.

THE EXTENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL AT SAUL'S DEATH was greater only on the E. of Jordan than it had been at his accession. He conquered the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and the King of Zobah, and almost exterminated the Amalekites; but he does not appear to have reduced any one of these to submission, or to tribute.

The Hebrew territory, accordingly, included, *at David's accession to the throne of all Israel*:—

1. *The land apportioned by Joshua to the Twelve Tribes, —excepting* the following peoples, states, and cities, which the tribes had failed to conquer:—

In the N.—Geshur,—Beth-shan, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo, (*in Issachar, but belonging to Manasseh*), —Dor, (*in Asher, but belonging to Manasseh*), —Kitron, and Nahalal, (*in Zebulun*),—the Maachathites,—Beth-shemesh, and Beth-anath, (*in Naphtali*),—Accho, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphek, and Rehob, (*in Asher*).

In the N.N.E.—"The Land of the Giblites."

In the N.W.—The Phœnicians.

In the S.—The Geshurites.

In the W.—The Amorites of Mount Heres, and Shaalbim, (in Dan),—unconquered, but tributary.

In the S.W.—The Philistines.

In the central parts of Palestine.—The Jebusites of Jerusalem,—Gezer, (of Ephraim).

2. The territory of the *Hagarites*, or *Hagarenes*, (so called after *Hagar*), a tribe of Ishmaelites, inhabiting the district E. of the portions of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, beyond Jordan. These three tribes defeated the Hagarites, (through the assistance of Jehovah, who listened to their cry in battle);—took their cattle, 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 asses,—and 100,000 men (!) as prisoners;—"and dwelt in their steads until the captivity." (I. Chron. v. 10; 19-22.)

DAVID seems to have determined to extend the boundaries of his empire to the limits that it had been foretold it should occupy.

The chief passages in which these are mentioned are as follows:—

To Abraham, God had declared,—“Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”

To Moses God had said,—

1.—“And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river.”

“*The Sea of the Philistines*” was the Mediterranean,—“*the desert*,” that to the S. of Palestine,—and “*the river*,” the Euphrates.

2.—“Go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”

“*The Mount of the Amorites*,”—in S. of Judah.

“*The Canaanites*”—the Canaanites proper, on the sea-coast.

3.—“From the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea,” (i.e., the furthest S.W. part of the Mediterranean).

“*The land of the Canaanites*,”—the Canaanites proper.

To Joshua the boundaries were thus prescribed:—

“From *the wilderness* and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.”

“*The wilderness*,”—the same as “*the desert*” before explained.

Collating these passages, we find *the foretold extent of the Hebrew territory* to have been as follows:—

From the River of Egypt, on the S.W. to the E. arm of the Red Sea, (including portions of that arm, and of “the S. desert”), thence E. to the Euphrates,—thence following the Euphrates N.W. till opposite Lebanon,—past Lebanon, to the coast of the Mediterranean, which formed the W. limit,—and from this point to the River of Egypt again.

All this territory, however, was not included in the “*Promised Land*,” i.e., in the country which God had allotted to be divided amongst the tribes: this was to reach, on the E., *to the Jordan only*.

It was only their own hostile conduct that led Moses to make war upon the kings E. of Jordan; but, having conquered their territory, he bestowed it on those tribes having the most flocks and herds.

But though the Jordan was to be the boundary of the land *to be divided*, it is clearly indicated that, if the Israelites chose, they might extend the limits of their territory as far E. as the Euphrates.

The tribes E. of Jordan, we have seen, took the Hagarites’ country, during Saul’s reign, thus making a great step towards reaching the utmost foretold E. boundary.

THE EXTENT OF THE KINGDOM AT DAVID’S DEATH, AND SOLOMON’S ACCESSION, was that just indicated as its foretold limit.

But though David had conquered the Jebusites, and taken their city,—held Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and nearly all Syria, under tribute,—and was acknowledged by Hamath as liege; yet the Phœnicians, and other native tribes and cities, remained, as far as Scripture informs us, independent under David, and at Solomon’s accession.

With respect to the E., (or rather *right-hand*), limit reached under David, the maps make it a line running from the E. arm of the Gulf of Akaba, to touch the Euphrates E. of Rezeph, and then take that river as the boundary for a short distance N.W. of Tipsah.

This we believe to be altogether wrong! We have shewn how the Trans-Jordanic tribes made a great step directly E., to the Euphrates, under Saul,—we find them, under David, reaching that river on the N.E., and so bringing Hadadezer upon them “to recover his boundary,”—and, at the same time, I. Chron. distinctly states that the Reubenites, (who were the most southerly tribe E. of Jordan), “inhabited eastwards unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates.” Taking this to have occurred under David, (as we have good reason to do), we find, in his reign, the kingdom reaching *Eastward* as far as the Euphrates, and accordingly attaining there, as it did N., W., and S., the utmost limits foretold; nor do we find that any serious attempt was ever made to advance E. of the Euphrates.

The right-hand boundary-line, then, of the kingdom, *at the death of Saul*, will be represented by a straight line drawn from a point on the N., opposite Tipsah, to one on the S., midway between the site of Babylon and Orchoë; and the boundary in the same direction, *at the Death of David*, and *the Accession of Saul*, will be *the Euphrates*, from a little N.W. of Tipsah, to half-way between Orchoë and Babylon.

(*At the same time, the limit given in the atlases generally should be got up*).

v. 1. “*Metheg-ammah*,”—should be “*Gath and her towns*.” It is so translated in the parallel in I. Chron.

After the Exodus, Philistia came to be divided into five “lordships,” each constituted of a city, and the district surrounding, with its towns and villages. The five cities, each of which was on an elevation, were Gaza, Ashdod, Askelon, Gath, and Ekron. The kings of these five states were called “the lords of the Philistines,” were independent of one another in time of peace,—but acted in common in case of war.

v. 2. “*Moab*.”—David had been on good terms with this people during his wanderings, his parents being sheltered by their king, while he was “in the hold.”

The cause of the war which we find him, in the text, waging with his late friends, is unknown, but, most probably, it was one for empire, wantonly initiated by him.

The Moabites remained tributary to Israel till the death of Ahab, when Mesha, their ruler, rebelled.

Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom defeated Mesha, and invaded his territory with terrible havoc.

The Edomites do not seem, however, to have been reduced to their former tributary state on this occasion, or subsequently.

"Measured them . . . keep alive."—David seems to have caused all the captives to lie down, and then, in lieu of slaying them all, (as the law allowed), to have marked off a certain proportion to be put to death, and a part to be spared. The text apparently points to two-thirds of the number as being destroyed; but the Septuagint and the Vulgate make the proportion one-half; the former representing that there were *two* lines each, and the latter *one* line each, respectively, for slaying, and sparing alive.

Some, incorrectly, regard this treatment as being applied to *the whole country of Moab*, and not to the war-captives only.

In the Moabite campaign Benaiah "slew two lionlike men of Moab," (c. xxiii., 20).

By this reduction of Moab was fulfilled Balaam's prophecy,—*"There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners (rather "princes") of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth,"* (rather "of tumult"). (Num. xxiv., 17.)

v. 2. *"Became David's servants, and brought gifts,"—i.e., became tributary vassals.*

David wrote Ps. xlv. to celebrate his victories over the Philistines, and over Moab.

v. 3. *"Hadadezer,"* (called in I. Chron., *"Hadarezer,"*)—a dynastic name of the Kings of Zobah.

"Zobah,"—at this period the most powerful of the small kingdoms of Syria. The *city* Zobah was, probably, the same as Aleppo, and the *kingdom* Zobah appears to have extended to Aleppo on the N.—to the Euphrates on the

E.—to Syria of Damascus on the S.—and to Hamath on the W. Saul had previously fought with its kings. Under Solomon, Hamath and Zobah seem to have become one kingdom.

“*As he went . . . Euphrates.*”—In the reign of Saul, the tribes E. of Jordan conquered the Hagarites, and so extended their territory. It is probable that they continued their incursions under David, and had advanced so far as to seize upon Hadadezer’s territory on the Euphrates: hence this expedition “to recover his border” in that quarter. The parallel in I. Chron. has, that David smote Hadadezer “*unto Hamath,*” (i.e., overran his territory from E. to W.), “as he went to *’stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates.*”

v. 4. “*Seven hundred horsemen,*”—“7,000,” in I. Chron “*Houghed,*”—*ham-strung* them, i.e., cut the thigh-sinews so rendering the animals useless. This practice was not ordered in the Law: Joshua first adopted it in his wars with the Northern Canaanites.

The Hebrews had good cause for thus treating captured horses, for they were forbidden to use that animal in war, and did not generally employ it for agriculture or travelling. Thus it was of no value to them, and the only alternative was either to sell, or to destroy all horses taken in battle. Had they adopted the former course, their enemies would have regained their steeds, to be again used against the Israelites; whereas, by following the latter plan, they greatly weakened their neighbouring foes, who had no breed of horses,—being in the habit of buying them from Egypt and Armenia.

“*Reserved of them for an hundred chariots,*”—a breach of the Law on David’s part, if these were intended for war-chariots.

v. 5. “*The Syrians of Damascus.*”—Damascus, with its surrounding territory, formed another of the petty Syrian states.

This attack drew off David’s attention from Hadadezer, —preventing the former from reaping the full fruits of his victory, and giving the latter opportunity to rally.

v. 6. “*The Syrians . . . brought gifts,*”—refers to the Syrians of Damascus alone.

v. 7. “*The shields of gold,*”—probably wooden, or iron, frames, covered with hide and overlaid with *plates* of gold.

They may, however, have been composed entirely of *lamine* of the precious metal.

v. 8. "*Betah*" . . . "*Berothai*,"—called, in I. Chron., "*Tibhath*" and "*Chun*."—The former are, probably, the Hebrew; and the latter, the Syriac, names. The sites are uncertain: the Arabic version makes them correspond, respectively, to *Emesa* and *Baalbec*.

"*Brass*,"—i.e., native *copper*. I. Chron. adds that with this metal "Solomon made the brasen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass," (i.e., in the Temple).

v. 9. "*Toi*,"—"Tou," in I. Chron.

"*Hamath*,"—another Syrian state.

v. 10. "*Joram*,"—"Hadoram," in I. Chron.

"*Vessels*,"—vases, &c.

v. 11. "*Did dedicate*,"—i.e., to the use of Solomon's to-be-erected Temple.

v. 12. "*Syria*,"—"Syria of *Damascus*," since "*Zobah*" is mentioned here separately.

"*Ammon*."—This is anticipatory, for the conquest of the Ammonites, by David, had not yet occurred.

"*Amalek*."—The spoils here mentioned as being taken from Amalek must be those seized by David when he successfully pursued the Amalekites, after their burning of Ziklag, ere he had become king.

v. 13. "*Smiting of the Syrians*,"—should be "smiting of the *Edomites*." The latter is the reading in I. Chron.: and Ps. lx., too, has *Edom*.

We are told in I. Kings, that *David* and *Joab* took part in this reduction of Edom,—that Joab stayed in Edom six months, with all the army, "until he had cut off every male in Edom," excepting Hadad, (a prince of the blood), and some of his father's servants, who escaped with him, then a child, into Egypt, where he married the sister of Pharaoh's wife, and whence he returned, after the death of David and Joab, to vex Solomon.

The parallel passage in I. Chron. makes *Abishai* the slayer of the 18,000, and reducer of Edom.

The title of Ps. lx. attributes the slaughter in the Valley of Salt to Joab, and puts the number that fell at 12,000.

Collating these passages, we must suppose David, Abishai, and Joab, to have all taken part in the battle, and Joab and his brother to have remained in the land six months, to reduce it, and place garrisons in its towns.

Since two out of three passages represent the slain as 18,000, it is probable that number is correct.

By the conquest of Edom, David became master of the Eastern branch of the Red Sea, and of the caravan tracks to Arabia.

At the Schism the rule over Edom remained with Judah.

In the reign of Jehoram they "made themselves a king," and maintained their independence of the Hebrews, in spite of several defeats.

The reduction of Edom, by David, (and its subsequent recovery of independence), fulfilled Jacob's prophecy, when he blessed the birthright-wronged Esau,—“And . . . thou shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.”—(Gen. xxvii., 40.)

Balam, too, had foretold this conquest, in connection with that of Moab,—“And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.”—(Num. xxiv., 18.)

CHAPTER IX.

David “shews kindness” to Mephi-bosheth, son of Jonathan.

v. 1. “*For Jonathan's sake.*”—David had made a solemn covenant with Jonathan, (at the latter's request), that at Saul's death, when David should ascend the throne, he would spare Jonathan, and make him next to himself in position in the kingdom: and that, should he die before David, the latter would not “*cut off his kindness from his house for ever.*”

It was, then, in fulfilment of this oath, that the King, when he experienced a lull in his affairs, turned his thoughts to the house of Saul.

v. 2. “*A servant,*”—rather “*a steward.*”

v. 3. “*Which is lame on his feet.*”—The circumstances under which he became lame have been previously detailed under Chap. IV.

v. 4. “*Machir,*”—doubtless some wealthy adherent of Saul's house.

"*Lo-debar*,"—the same as *Debir* of Gad, E. of Jordan.

v. 6. "*Mephi-bosheth*,"—called in I. Chron., "*Merib-Baal*."—This prince was, according to our ideas, the lineal heir to the throne, at Saul's death; but, in those days, the younger son of a monarch was regarded as having a superior claim to the child of the same monarch's elder son, where the latter happened to die (as Jonathan did), without coming to the throne. Moreover, (as in our own Anglo-Saxon days,) a preference was shewn to adults over children, and to the strong and able over the weak. Accordingly, Mephi-bosheth, being both lame, and a child, was set aside by the supporters of the house of Saul, at the latter's death, in favor of Ish-bosheth, a younger son of the departed monarch. It is tolerably evident, too, that Mephi-bosheth was not only physically incapacitated from making any effort for the throne, but was utterly without the desire to sit upon it; he seems to have been a quiet, amiable, and retiring, prince.

We gather from I. Chron. that Mephi-bosheth had a son, named Micah.

v. 7. "*All the land of Saul*,"—i.e. his family estates.

"*Father*,"—here = *ancestor*; Saul was, of course, Mephi-bosheth's *grand-father*.

v. 10. "*Thou shalt . . . food to eat: but . . . at my table*."—There seems, at first sight, a contradiction here, for, if Mephi-bosheth were to eat always at David's table, where would be the sense of bringing in the produce of his lands that he might have food to eat?

The solution is that David did not intend Mephi-bosheth to eat with him *at all times*; but that he should always do so on those great occasions when the king, instead of eating alone, dined with his sons, and the other princes of the royal family, and the chief officers. David held just such a position in Saul's reign;—he had a "place" assigned to him at the royal table, but was not expected to use it till the festival of the new moon, when Saul dined in company.

On ordinary occasions, then, Mephi-bosheth would *not* eat with David, and would, therefore, *need* the produce of his lands for "food to eat" for himself; and, as we read that all Ziba's household were servants to Mephi-bosheth, it is pretty certain that he had to support from his lands much of the expenditure of the general *ménage*.

CHAPTER X.

Nahash, King of the Ammonites, dying, David sends a friendly Embassy to comfort his son and successor, Hanun; the latter abuses the messengers, and unites with the Syrians against David; the allied forces are defeated.—The Syrians, generally, league themselves against David; take the field, under Shobach; and are defeated, Shobach being slain.—The Syrian states before subject to Zobah make peace with David, and become his vassals.

v. 1. "*The king of the children of Ammon.*"—Nahash, who is infamously notorious for his offer to the people of Jabesh-Gilead, when he besieged that town. They declared themselves willing to submit to his yoke, if he would make a covenant with them, to which he replied that he would accept their proposal, on condition that he might thrust out all their right eyes. They begged, and obtained, seven days' respite, in order to see if they could, *interim*, find anyone to save them. This Saul did, on the very last day of grace, coming upon Nahash with over 300,000 men, and slaughtering his forces with fearful carnage. (I. Sam. xi. 1-11.)

"*Ammon.*"—After David's conquest and reduction of this people, they remained in subjection till the Schism, when they recovered their independence, and maintained it, with the exception of a period of three years, during which—after being defeated by Jotham, king of Judah—they were tributary.

v. 2. "*Nahash . . . shewed kindness unto me.*"—What this "kindness" was is nowhere recorded: it probably consisted of shelter and succour during David's persecution by Saul. As Saul was the mutual enemy of David and of Nahash, the latter would, naturally, aid the former.

v. 3. "*Hath not David . . . to overthrow it?*"—This was a very natural and probable supposition, since David had, without apparent cause, made war upon his, and the Ammonites' friends, the Moabites.

"*The city*,"—Ammon's capital, Rabbath-Ammon.

v. 4. "*Shaved off the one half of their beards*."—No keener insult could have been offered the ambassadors. The beard was, and is, held, in the East, in profoundest veneration, and its absence from a man's face is regarded as "a mark of infamy, that degrades a person from the ranks of men to those of slaves and women."

The cutting off only *half* the beards was a bitter aggravation of the outrage, since such cutting was a usual punishment for cowardice,—to say nothing of the ludicrously grotesque figure these semi-shaven plenipotentiaries must have worn.

After such an insult, David had no choice but to go to war.

v. 5. "*Tarry . . . return*."—An Oriental losing his beard by any chance will remain in strictest seclusion, till it be grown again.

"*Stank before David*,"—a strong expression of the disgust and rage of the King. I. Chron. puts it more euphemistically,—"*had made themselves odious to David*."

"*Hired*,"—for 1000 talents of silver, as I. Chron. records.

"*The Syrians of Beth-rehob*."—Beth-rehob was another of the small cantons into which Syria was now divided: it lay at the foot of Anti-Libanus, where was its capital, Rehob, or Beth-rehob. It was allotted to Asher, and named one of the Levitical cities; but appears never to have been taken possession of.

"*The Syrians of Zobah*."—Hadadezer had been defeated, but not reduced to subjection, by David, in the former war. Having evidently recovered his past disasters, he accepts service with Hanun, as a mercenary, and takes a prominent part in the Ammonite and Syrian war against David.

"*King Maacah*,"—should be, (as in I. Chron.), "*King of Maacah*," (which was another petty Syrian state, lying S. of Rehob).

"*Ish-tob*,"—most probably the same as "*the land of Tob*," where Jephthah took refuge in his exile.

It would seem to have been another of the petty Syrian cantons, beyond the territory of the tribes, and to have been situated in Trachonitis, near the land of the Ammonites.

I. Chron. makes the mercenary Syrian forces to have

been collected from Zobah, Maacah, and *Mesopotamia*,—not naming Beth-rehob, and Ish-tob.

"*Mesopotamia*" being often used as a general name for Syria, we must regard the account in I. Chron. as meaning that paid forces were drawn from Zobah, Maacah, (these being mentioned, because the most powerful of the allies), and other parts of Syria, (*i.e.*, Beth-rehob, and Ish-tob), as is told us in the text.

The number and kind of mercenaries are thus stated, in

1. *The Text*.:—

From Beth-rehob, and Zobah . . . "20,000 foot-men."

„ Maacah "1,000 men."

„ Ish-tob "12,000 men."—

Total 33,000.

2. *I. Chron.*:—

"They hired" "32,000 chariots," and

"The King of Maacah and his

people," number not given ;

putting it, (as in Sam.)

at "1,000 men," we

have, Total 33,000.

The two accounts tally as to numbers; but not with regard to the character of the forces employed: *Samuel* represents the whole 33,000 as, apparently, *infantry*; *Chron.* makes 32,000 *chariots*, and, apparently, 1000 *infantry*.

The difficulty is removed, correctly, if we read "*riders*," instead of "*chariots*." The fact then appears to be that 33,000 Syrians were hired, and that, of these, 32,000 were men who *usually mounted* on chariots, or on horseback, *but who could serve on foot* also: while the 1,000 from Maacah were regular *infantry*.

v. 8. "*Came out*,"—*i.e.*, out of their capital, Rabbah, (Rabbath-Ammon).

"*In the field*,"—before Medeba, (I. Chron.).

v. 9. "*The front . . . behind*,"—*i.e.*, he found himself confronted by two armies, (the Ammonites drawn up near Rabbah, and the Syrians at Medeba), so that, whichever he might attack, the other faced his rear.

The victory over the *Syro-Ammonite League*, though brilliant, was *not decisive*.

v. 16. "*The Syrians that were beyond the river,*" (i.e., Euphrates),—probably small tribes, vassals to Hadadezer.

"*Helam,*"—situation unknown; it was, evidently, however, far to the E.—perhaps close to the Euphrates.

"*Shobach,*"—"Shophach" in I. Chron.

From the large number of slain, it would seem that the Syrian states that had aided the Ammonites, (viz., Zobah, Maacah, and Ish-tob), joined Hadadezer in this confederacy to crush David. "Syria of Damascus" no doubt remained David's vassal, for it is not mentioned as aiding in either of these two campaigns in which its sister states were engaged.

v. 18. "*The men of 700 chariots.*"—I. Chron. has "7,000 men which fought in chariots." "The men of," in the text, and "which fought in," in I. Chron., are not in the original, which has "700 chariots," (in Sam.), and "7,000 chariots," (in Chron.) It will be seen hereafter that we regard the 700 and the 7,000 as distinct. Were they taken as referring to the same force, we should think "700" an error for "7,000." In this case, (as in that just commented on, where we read "32,000 chariots"), we should assume that the 700 were men *accustomed* to serve on horseback, or in chariots, but able, on occasion, to act as infantry, and that, in the present instance, they fought in chariots.

"*Forty-thousand horsemen.*"—I. Chron. has "40,000 footmen," which appears to be correct. We may regard Sam. in error, and read "footmen" in both passages. We might, indeed, accept both statements as correct, by regarding these 40,000 as being able to act as either cavalry or infantry; but we have seen that these, so-to-speak, amphibious warriors are already represented by the 700; had the 40,000 been of the same class, the whole would have been grouped under one name, which is *not* done. *The most feasible way to reconcile the statement in Sam., with that in Chron., is to collate, and regard the slain as consisting of "the men of 700 chariots," 7,000 cavalry, and 40,000 infantry.*

The student is advised to accept this solution.

One remarkable feature in this war is that the Israelites, though themselves destitute of cavalry, should be able to defeat their enemies' chariots and horses, and that with such terrible loss. It has been suggested, very plausibly,

that Toi of Hamath, remaining faithful to David, helped him with mounted forces.

v. 19. "*And when all . . . and served them.*"—Thus all Syria, saving those states which had been friendly, and a few others that had kept aloof, became David's vassals.

At the time of the Syro-Ammonite league, David probably composed Psalms xx., (before their defeat); xxi., (after their defeat).

On occasion of his last war with Hadadezer and allies, (and of Joab's slaughter of the Edomites), David wrote Psalm lx.,—its title being,—“To the chief musician upon Shushan-eduth, Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aram-naharaim, (*i.e.* Mesopotamia), and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand.” It would appear, hence, that the final defeat of the Syrians, and the reduction of Edom, happened nearly together,—so that the latter event is not chronologically placed in II. Samuel.

CHAPTER XI.

The Ammonite War, continued; Joab besieges Rabbah. — David commits adultery with Bath-sheba; procures the death of her husband, Uriah the Hittite; and takes the widow into his house as wife: she bears him a son.

v. 1. "*After the year was expired,*"—*i.e.* the year in which the wars just narrated occurred.

"*When kings go forth to battle,*"—*i.e.* at the beginning of Spring.

"*Destroyed the children . . . besieged Rabbah.*"—I. Chron. has "*wasted the country* of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah." This latter is, no doubt, correct, for if Joab *destroyed* the Ammonites, there would be no Rabbah to besiege,—whereas we can well imagine Joab *wasting* the country on his way to lay siege to the Ammonite capital, into which he seems to have driven their forces.

"*Bed*,"—a couch, or mat.

v. 2. "*David arose from off his bed*,"—after his *siesta*. In the E. all who are not compelled to occupation at the time, take this afternoon nap. The great heat renders it necessary, and its being indulged in does not justify the charge of laziness, since Orientals rise at day-break.

"*Walked upon the roof of the king's house*,"—to enjoy the evening cool. From this flat roof of his palace, which would be greatly above the surrounding houses, David was able to overlook private court-yards, gardens, &c., which accounts for his catching sight of Bath-sheba.

v. 3. "*Bath-sheba*,"—"Bath-shua," in I. Chron.,—was grand-daughter of Ahithophel. The only other incident recorded of her, (besides her adultery), is her disinterested intercession with Solomon, on behalf of the crafty Adonijah, when he wished to espouse Abishag. In the interview between herself and her son, on this occasion, we are struck by the great respect manifested towards her by Solomon. The Rabbins represent her as being a most intellectual and widely-educated woman, and attribute Solomon's love of literature, and his vast knowledge, to her efforts to train him to occupy efficiently and honourably the high destiny before him.

"*Eliam*,"—"Ammiel," in I. Chron.

"*Uriah*,"—was one of David's "mighty men."

"*The Hittite*."—The Hittites, or descendants of Heth, were one of the native tribes of Palestine, dwelling in the "mountains of Judah," round about Hebron. They were the most powerful of the Canaanitish nations, and were never completely reduced by the Israelites, for though Solomon "laid a tribute of bond-service" upon them, (together with the remnant of the other native tribes), they retained a king of their own.

It is generally supposed that Uriah was a proselyte, and descended, probably, from a line of proselytes.

v. 4. "*Took her*."—Bath-sheba's obedience to David's call must not be judged by our standard of opinion; it must be remembered that woman is, in the E., a mere slave, and that kings are in the habit of exercising the most outrageous tyranny in filling their harems. We must have regard, also, to the era of David, in which monarchs were even more despotic, and their people more helpless than they are now.

Though well acquainted with the Law, and striving, as a rule, to obey its precepts, there is no doubt David was tainted with the ideas and habits of the monarchs around him, and, in his passion, lost all consideration of the heinousness of adultery and murder, and committed both crimes without compunction, or remorse, until Nathan put his conduct before him in its proper light.

v. 11. "*The ark*,"—appears, from this verse, to be again in the battle, as it had been when taken by the Philistines.

There does not appear to have been any Divine command to carry the Ark with the army on this occasion, and, therefore, the step was decidedly wrong. The motives actuating the Israelites in carrying the sacred coffer to battle, seem to have been the expectation that, as the Ark was the dwelling-place of Jehovah, *its* presence would ensure *His*,—of course on their behalf. This idea would be strengthened by remembering how, (*e.g.*, in crossing the Jordan), the presence of the Ark had been accompanied by great and fortunate events.

v. 16. "*Observed*,"—*i.e.*, carefully reconnoitred.

v. 20. "*That the King's wrath arise*,"—Crafty Joab feared that, if the news of Uriah's death were first told, David would be almost certain to betray his joy, and so reveal his guilty scheme; accordingly he instructs the messenger to give an account, first, of the defeat of the army, without naming Uriah. This would lead the king to suppose that Uriah was still alive, and that the scheme had ended in disappointment, and disgrace to the army,—his anger, at the defeat, would certainly burst forth,—and no suspicion would rest upon him of having arranged the matter beforehand. *Then* the messenger was to announce, as if a second thought, and altogether inferior in importance to the previous news, *the one piece of news for which David panted*,—Uriah's death.

v. 21. "*Who smote Abimelech . . Thebez*"?—Abimelech, an illegitimate son of Gideon, by a Shechemite woman, gained the Shechemites over to support him as ruler, instead of his seventy brethren, and to give him money, by means of which he hired men to slay all his brethren, save Jotham,—became *King* over the Shechemites,—and assumed the *Judgeship* over all Israel. After three years, the Shechemites revolted from him, during his absence, and followed Gaal. Zebul, governor of Shechem, sent notice to

Abimelech that Gaal and the people had fortified the town against him. Abimelech thereupon returned,—defeated Gaal,—destroyed Shechem by fire,—and burned one thousand people who had refuged in the house of Baal-berith. He then marched against *Thebez*, a place in the E. of Manasseh W. of Jordan. He took the city; but the “tower” held out. He accordingly proceeded to set fire to the door of the tower; but approached too close to the wall, “and a certain woman cast a piece of millstone upon Abimelech’s head, and all to (=altogether), brake his scull.” Thereupon, to save the disgrace of being actually slain by a woman, he caused his armour-bearer to “thrust him through,—and he died.”

v. 27. “*When the mourning was past,*”—i.e. the mourning of Bathsheba for her husband. It seems most probable that she believed her husband’s death to have been a mere chance of war, and was, therefore, ignorant that she owed his loss to David. Indeed, the whole unhappy affair would appear to have been kept very quiet. David, Joab, Nathan, and Bathsheba appear to have been the only four human beings who knew anything of the matter,—and, probably, the three men alone knew of the murder.

Bathsheba’s adultery could easily be kept secret amongst the four, since Uriah’s death prevented his declaring the illegitimacy of the child; and that it *was* so kept is pretty clear from the fact that she was never accused, or punished, for the crime.

From the time of the army setting out to Rabbah, until the birth of his illegitimate child by Bathsheba, a period of over a year seems to have elapsed.

CHAPTER XII.

Nathan’s Parable; David repents, and is assured of pardon.—His child by Bath-sheba dies.—Bath-sheba bears Solomon.—Rabbah taken, and the Ammonites reduced to submission.

Nathan’s Parable is the second specimen of this species of composition in the Bible, the first recorded being

Jotham's Parable of the Trees electing a King, spoken by him, (after his escape from Abimelech), on Mount Gerozin, to the Shechemites.

The third parable in the Scriptures is that spoken to David by the "wise women" of Tekoah.

The fourth is that of

The Thistle and the Cedar,—spoken by Jehoash, king of Israel, to Amaziah, king of Judah, when the latter challenged the former to battle.

There are, besides these four, very numerous parables scattered throughout the Prophets,—the most sustained being that of *The Vineyard*, in Isaiah.

[Some, however, regard *Lamech's Speech to his Wives*, (recorded in Genesis), as a Parable.—If this view is correct, that Speech is *the first apologue in the Scriptures*.]

v. 3. "*Ewe-lamb*,"—Bathsheba,—an exquisitely appropriate type of a gentle, lovely, woman !

v. 4. "*There came . . . unto him*."—The rites of hospitality are rigidly observed, in the E., in the case of travellers, after the manner indicated in the text and elsewhere in the Old Testament. On the arrival of a traveller, an animal was taken from the flock or the herd, and killed,—and its tid-bits cut off, speedily roasted, or boiled, and served up with newly-made cakes of a superior quality to the usual family-bread.

v. 6. "*He shall restore the lamb four-fold*."—This was in accordance with the Law, which commanded that, in cases where cattle or sheep should be stolen and applied to the use of the thief, the latter should restore five-fold for an ox, and *four-fold for a sheep*, (or lamb).

v. 5. "*The man that hath done this thing shall surely die*."—This was not according to the Law,—but a threat of what he himself would order to be done to the "rich man."

v. 6. "*Because he had no pity*."—This reason David assigns for slaying the thief, not for making him pay restitution, the doing which depended on the Law, not on whether the robber shewed pity, or not.

v. 8. "*I gave . . . thy master's wives into thy bosom*,"—is only another form of declaring that God had *made David king*, since succession to the harem of a predecessor was, amongst Eastern nations, a most essential part of

the ceremony of assuming the throne. The practice was opposed to the Law, but was adopted by the Israelites, (in imitation of the surrounding states), though soon laid aside.

vs. 10, 11. "*The sword shall never depart from thy house. . . . I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.*"—This prophecy found striking fulfilment, e.g. in the forcing of Tamar by Amnon,—Amnon's murder by Absalom,—Absalom's rebellion, and death,—and the revolt of Adonijah.

v. 11. "*I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour.*"—This occurred in the Rebellion of Absalom, when the latter took for himself ten of David's concubine-wives, whom the King had left behind him in Jerusalem.

v. 24. "*Solomon*" = *the peaceful one.*

v. 25. "*Jedidiah*" = *beloved of the Lord.*

To the period of David's Adultery belong the following of his Psalms:—

LI., (after Nathan had denounced him; the finest penitential ode and prayer in existence); CIII., (after the death of Bath-sheba's child, when he was comforted, and experienced a sense of forgiveness).

The following were suggested by the events, though written afterwards:—

XXXII., (Absalom's rebellion recalls to him the judgments denounced upon him for his crimes); XXXVIII., XXXIX., (both written during severe illness, when his great sin was recalled to rankling recollection); XL., (celebrating his recovery from this sickness).

vs. 26, 27. "*Took the royal city.*" . . . "*I . . . have taken the city of waters.*"

The second passage explains the first.—Joab had captured the lower town, (called the "*city of waters*" on account of the perennial spring rising in it, and flowing through it), but the *citadel* still held out. This, however, must speedily be his, since he had taken possession of the "*waters*;" accordingly, he postponed his attack upon it until David's arrival, and sent to hasten his coming.

v. 28. "*Take it: . . . after my name.*"—It was a common custom in ancient times for a general to put off the last successful operation of a siege, or campaign, and

send for his monarch to be present at the *coup de grace*,—and, when this happened, the glory of the whole undertaking was assumed by the potentate who had condescended to shew himself at the last moment.

v. 30. "*Took their king's crown . . . David's head.*"—There is a difficulty about this passage, owing to the weight assigned to the crown, viz., "*a talent of gold*" (= 125 lbs. Troy).

Neither the King of Ammon, nor David, could wear such a heavy crown, though the text seems to assert that they did.

Various elucidations of the passage have been suggested:—

1. It is said a Syrian talent (= 30 lbs. Troy), is here intended. Now this does not meet the case, for no one could possibly bear even 30 lbs. as a dead-weight on the head.

2. It is asserted that "*their king's crown*" should be rendered "*the crown of Milcom*,"—i.e. some celebrated crown adorning the head of their idol Milcom. But here, again, occurs the difficulty, that though 30 lbs., (and even 125 lbs.), could be no burden to an idol, *David* is represented as wearing it.

The reply to this is, that the idol's crown consisted, probably, of a gold framework, surrounded by the "precious stones" in a hoop, and that it was the circlet of gems alone that David put upon his own head.

This explanation seems altogether far-fetched, and patched up.

3. Many regard the crown as being not worn *on*, but hung *above* the head of the king, over the throne.

Ancient monarchs *did* employ such crowns, of great weight, size, and magnificence.

This explanation avoids every difficulty, and *seems the correct one*.

v. 31. "*Put them under*,"—is in I. Chron., "*Cut them with*." These two readings suggest, of course, that David either—

1. Reduced them to personal servitude, by making them work as artificers, agricultural labourers, and brickmakers.
2. Beheaded them with axes, sawed them asunder, tore them with harrows, and burnt, (or smothered), them in the brick-kilns.

It is possible that the Ammonites had been guilty of the greatest atrocities, and that David now inflicted upon them what they had made others suffer; but it would appear that *the first explanation is the more correct*, as it is the more consonant with humanity. We might render "*put them under*" as "*put them to*,"—a change that strengthens the first view, for we talk of *putting any one to any work, trade, or profession.*

CHAPTER XIII.

Tamar outraged by Amnon.—Absalom causes Amnon to be slain, at a sheep-shearing festival; and flees to Talmai, King of Geshur.

v. 1. "*After this . . . Absalom . . . had a fair sister.*"—This does not mean that Absalom's sister was born after the events just narrated. It is only a Hebrew fashion of saying that Absalom had a fair sister, and that soon after the matters last narrated Amnon fell in love with her.

"*Absalom*,"—third son of David, his mother being Maachah, daughter of Talmai, King of Geshur. He was David's only son by Maachah, and Tamar was his uterine sister. The same state of things must have obtained in the household of David that still exists where polygamy is practised. The harem is split up into as many cliques as there are wives with families,—all the factions full of envy and hatred of all the rest, which feelings frequently break out into open feuds.

Thus we read here that "*Absalom had a fair sister*,"—as though Tamar were *not* sister to David's other children, but only to her brother by the same father and mother.

"*Amnon*,"—David's eldest son, by Ahinoam of Jezreel.

v. 3. "*Shimeah, David's brother*,"—his *third* brother,—called also "*Shammah*," and "*Shimma*."

v. 5. "*Let my sister . . . at her hand.*"—The making of pastry, &c., devolves upon women, in the East, whatever their rank. They take much pride in endeavouring to excel in this art, and Tamar had, it would seem, gained a great reputation for the preparation of certain "*cakes*."

Amnon's request would, then, appear very natural, and

be regarded merely as the result of a sick man's fanciful appetite.

v. 8. "*Did bake the cakes*,"—probably either in the fire-pit in the floor, or on a plate of metal over a brazier of charcoal. The cakes would be *thin* ones, and, therefore, quickly baked.

v. 10. "*Into the chamber*,"—the "cakes" having, probably, been prepared in an outer room, while Amnon lay in an inner apartment.

v. 12. "*Folly*,"=wickedness.

v. 13. "*He will not withhold me from thee*."—David *would* have withheld her, if he had been asked for her by Amnon, and had obeyed the Law in the matter, for marriage with a sister, (whether by the same father, or the same mother), is clearly prohibited.

v. 18. "*A garment of divers colours*,"—probably a loose wrapper, or robe, like the "*Babylonish garment*" stolen by Achan, and that named in the Song of Deborah and Barak as "of divers colours of needlework on both sides."

v. 20. "*Tamar remained desolate . . . house*."—It may seem strange, at first sight, that the care of Tamar, and the avenging her wrong, should fall to Absalom, and not to her father. But this is still the custom in the E., in polygamous states. The brother possesses more power in all concerning his uterine sister than the father has. We have another instance of the same thing in the case of Simeon and Levi, who settled about their own sister Dinah's marriage, and avenged her wrong, on the men of Shechem, independently of Jacob, their father.

v. 23. "*Absalom had sheep-shearers*."—These sheep-shearings were most joyous festivals: we read of Nabal celebrating one, and refusing a share of his good cheer to David,—a very unusual thing, as all seem to have been free to come, and take part in the ample provision made.

"*Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim*."—The *Ephraim* here named is *the town* so called, not the tribe. *Ephraim* appears to have been about eight miles from Jerusalem, on the way to Jericho. Baal-hazor, then, was somewhere in that neighbourhood, but its actual site is unknown.

v. 25. "*Lest we be chargeable unto thee*,"—a specimen of Oriental formal courtesy, to which correspond our, "I am afraid I shall be giving you too much trouble," and like phrases.

v. 26. "*Why should he go with thee?*"—"He" is here emphatic. David appears to have had a momentary doubt, or suspicion, of Absalom, when the latter thus so far forgot all caution as to ask that Amnon *at any rate* might come. We find that at length David's leave to *all* his sons' going was obtained. We may suppose, then, that Absalom had removed his father's misgiving,—probably, by urging that, as David would not himself be present, he would at any rate confer the next high honour of allowing Amnon, the eldest son, and heir-apparent, to grace the scene by his presence.

It is interesting to note how superior was David's affection for Absalom to that he bore Amnon, his eldest son. This is rendered apparent by comparing the account of his bitter, inconsolable, grief, at Absalom's death, with the following matter-of-fact statement,—"*He was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead*"!! as though he had said to himself, with cool stoicism, "Well! he's dead; and nothing can restore him: what's the use of mourning"?

v. 29. "*Mule*,"—the first *indisputable* mention of these animals, in Scripture. The mule did not displace the ass, which had hitherto been the chief beast of burden, and roadster; but seems to have been adopted *for riding, by persons of distinction*.

The Israelites might not *breed* mules, so their first supply must have been taken in war, or, perhaps, sent to David by Hiram of Tyre.

v. 37. "*Talmai*,"—father of David's wife Maachah, and, consequently, grandfather of Absalom.

"*Geshur*,"—a small kingdom of Syria, lying to the N. of Palestine, between Mount Hermon, Aram-Maachah, and Bashan. It was allotted, in dividing Palestine, to Manasseh E. of Jordan; but it remained unreduced, and had an independent monarch.

There was a tribe of Geshurites, also, S. of Philistia.

v. 39. "*Longed*,"—in the margin, "*was consumed*," (i.e., with longing).

CHAPTER XIV.

Joab procures Absalom's Return from Exile,
and a reconciliation between him and David.
—Absalom's person, and family.

v. 2. "*Tekoah*,"—a town about six miles S. of Bethlehem,—afterwards fortified by Rehoboam,—birth-place of Amos, the prophet.

Joab seems to have fetched this woman from Tekoah, because the distance, while not too great for her, was sufficient to debar David from an immediate quest as to the truth of her statements.

"*Anoint not thyself with oil*."—The Jews were accustomed to anoint both hair and skin before going out to pay a visit, and the absence of oil under such circumstances was always accepted as a sign that the unanointed person was mourning.

v. 6. "*They two . . . slew him*."—It is remarkable that the course adopted by the woman, under Joab's instruction, to induce David to pronounce an opinion on his own conduct to Absalom, should have been exactly that taken by Nathan *in re* Bath-sheba. And it is noteworthy that the two narratives are alike in one important particular,—*viz.*, in representing the crimes committed as inferior in enormity to what they really were, for Nathan makes his Rich Man steal the Ewe-lamb, but omits the murder of its owner, (Uriah): and the "wise woman" makes the death of her imaginary son result from an accidental strife between him and his brother, whereas Absalom deliberately planned the murder of Amnon, and executed it in cold blood, when his brother was an invited guest at his table!

v. 7. "*Deliver him . . . whom he slew*."—Had the woman's story been true, we must imagine that the surviving son had not been able to reach a City of Refuge, the blood-avenger having proved too quick for him, and that he was in some shelter known to his mother only; for a case like the one she proposes would be decided as not one of murder, had the man-slayer escaped to a City of Refuge, and been tried by the judges.

Or, perhaps, the law in this respect had, in the general laxity which seems to have characterised the Israelites at

this era, fallen into desuétude. If this were so, it was of no avail to shelter in one of the appointed cities until the case could be fairly tried. The blood-avenger would then have everything in his favour, and the only chance of escape that the man-slayer might possess would lie in the next of kin's not taking the matter up,—or in the homicide's lying *perdu*, or fleeing. Absalom adopted the last course; but he need not have done so, (since no one of the family appears to have taken upon himself the office of avenger), and might have remained unmolested at Jerusalem during the time he spent in exile, just as well as he did during the two years after his return, when his father would not see him.

Consequently, the woman's representation in this passage is contrary to the true state of things as regarded Absalom, for, instead of "the whole family" clamorously demanding the death of Absalom, not one of them appears to have done so. The woman's statement, however, shews how strong was the principle of blood-revenge, since she, the most injured party in the supposed case, and actually *mother* of the man-slayer, had no power to stay his execution, when he should be taken.

v. 7, 14. "*They shall quench my coal.*"—"We must needs die, and are as water, spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again."—This metaphor, and simile, are very beautiful, though simple, and their use, in addressing David, who had a true poet's soul, has been, by some, supposed to have been craftily intentional, with a view to enlist his attention and sympathy.

The conversation between David and the woman of Tekoah requires an explanation, for, as it stands, it reads somewhat vaguely. The following seems to present its meaning pretty correctly:—

The woman's aim was to reconcile David's conscience to pardoning Absalom, (which his affections urged him to do, while his duty as king, and head of his house, demanded from him stern punishment), and allowing his return from exile. This she hoped to accomplish "by proving that, in so doing, he did no otherwise than he would have done, in the case of a stranger." Accordingly, she makes a statement of a fictitious case, in very touching terms, skilfully representing the criminality of the man-slayer as much less than Absalom's, so as to induce David to give a favourable reply.

The king's answer telling her to go home, and promising that he will give orders about her case, (*i.e.*, when he has thought it over), was most unsatisfactory, since David's reflections might lead him to a belief in the guilt of the supposed party, and to his consequently refusing to interfere.

The woman, then, re-urges her suit, and, believing David to be deterred from at once promising her that her son shall live, (and so virtually pardoning Absalom), by the fear that he may be sparing a *guilty* man, declares that she will accept, for herself and her father's house, the *onus* of any injustice that may turn out to have been done by David's granting her son's life, and that David shall be "guiltless" in such case.

David again replies, pledging himself that he will take care that anyone molesting her, shall not repeat the act, if she will bring the person before him. Now, *this* promise was useless, for it did not include the King himself, who was the only one of the family at all likely to molest Absalom.

Undaunted, the woman returns to the charge, and asks David to *swear that her son shall not be put to death*.

The king, overcome by her importunity, yields, and swears, "*As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.*"

Here then, if she could only make David believe that the case she had been proposing was like that of Absalom, was a solemn pledge that not even he, (the King), would raise hand against his son.

But there were still two points to be gained,—David was to be made to perceive that the woman had had Absalom in view all the time,—and to consent to his return from exile. Accordingly, (assuming that David's promise is founded simply upon the merits of the case), she boldly declares to the king that he has just pronounced an unfavorable opinion on his own conduct, in not bringing back his "banished," (*i.e.* Absalom). She goes on to say that "the people of God," (*i.e.*, the Israelites), hold him to be in the wrong in keeping his son in exile,—that she has been urged by the people to come to David as their spokeswoman,—that she has yielded to their compulsion,—and has recited before him a story concocted by her, in analogy to Absalom's case, relying, for a "*comfortable*," (*i.e.*, *favourable*), decision upon the king's being "as an angel of

God . . . to discern good and bad." (A fine specimen of flattery, to which David seems to have been very open!) She urges, also, as additional reasons why Absalom should cease to be under bann, that—

1. "*We must all die*," without respect of person before God, (whence she would have it inferred that Absalom had been merely the divinely-appointed agent of Heaven to cut his brother off at his appointed time).
2. God "*doth devise means, that His banished be not expelled*, (i.e., for ever), *from Him*,"—i.e., that He has appointed ways, (e.g., sacrifice, and repentance), whereby the very worst may become reconciled to Him, however far they may have strayed from Him into the paths of sin, (whence she would have it inferred that, in conformity with the Divine method of acting, pardon should be extended to Absalom, by David).

v. 21. "*I have done this thing*,"—i.e., consented to pardon Absalom, and remit his exile.

David was thus led, by the wise speech of "the woman of Tekoah," to regard the fictitious case presented to him as being like that of *his* two sons, whereas it was totally different, as we have already seen. In this instance, "the wish," (to restore Absalom to favour), was truly "father to the thought."

v. 28. "*Absalom dwelt . . . the king's face*."—David's sense of duty appears to have returned, with the advent of Absalom to Jerusalem, and, therefore, he did not feel justified in summoning him to Court, and openly restoring his affection to him. This behaviour on the king's part may have been caused by—

1. A feeling, when the woman had left him, that he had been partly cajoled, and partly coerced into the pardon and the recall, and that he had not really acted conscientiously in the affair.
2. Hearing whispers amongst those surrounding him, that his conduct had been unjust and partial, which would naturally deter him from openly acknowledging Absalom.

v. 29. "*To have sent him to the king*,"—i.e., to intercede with David for a full reconciliation, and the restoration of Absalom to his favour, at Court.

v. 33. "*Kissed Absalom,*"—with "the kiss of peace."

v. 26. "*The hair was heavy on him.*"—Jewish males wore their hair long and flowing, at this era, whereas in the days of the Apostles it was, as Paul states, "*a shame unto him, if a man have long hair.*" Josephus says that the men of Solomon's "guard" wore their hair long,—daily anointing it, and powdering it with gold-dust, (that it might glitter in the sun).

Now, if *Absalom* were in the habit of doing this, the unguents and gold would form a portion of the weight, which, however, seems extraordinary, with even this subtraction from its gross.

"*Two hundred shekels, after the king's weight.*"—Several explanations of these words have been suggested, of which the following are the principal :—

1. *The hair actually weighed 200 shekels*, ($= 8\frac{1}{3}$ lbs. Troy),—"after the king's weight" meaning, according to the exact national standards of weight kept in the royal treasury. *This does not seem correct*, for no man could possibly carry such a weight on his head continually.
2. "*The shekel after the king's weight*" was different from the ordinary shekel,—weighing only one-third as much. This would make Absalom's shorn locks come to about $2\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. *This seems the correct solution.*

This method of estimating by the "*king's weight*" was introduced from Babylon, after the Return from the Captivity,—whence the words "*after the king's weight*" must have been interpolated in this passage subsequently to the Return.

Some have supposed that "200 shekels" was the *value*, not the *weight*, of the hair. This *may* have been so, but is scarcely likely, since there was no market for hair amongst the Jews, wigs being unknown to them.

The text represents the "*polling*" of Absalom's hair as occurring *yearly*; but the original rather indicates that it was polled *from time to time during the year*, whenever it became (uncomfortably) "*heavy.*"

Absalom's motive in having his hair weighed was, evidently, that the fame of its great weight might make up to his vain mind for the temporary loss in beauty of appearance, while it was growing again.

It is noteworthy that the very hair of which he was so vain caused his death.

ABSALOM'S REVOLT.

CHAPTER XV.

Absalom steals the people's hearts; and raises, at Hebron, the standard of revolt.—David flees from Jerusalem,—Ittai refuses to leave him,—he sends back to the City Zadok and Abiathar, with the Ark,—and goes on his way up the ascent of Olivet.—Hushai meets the King, and is, by him, sent back to Jerusalem, to endeavour to bring to nought the counsel of Ahithophel.

v. 1. "*Prepared him chariots, and horses, and fifty men to run before him.*"—The formation of this body-guard was Absalom's first step towards assuming the Kingly office, since such retinues were the peculiar accompaniment of monarchs.

v. 2. "*Rose up early,*"—because the judicial and other public business was, doubtless, transacted early in the day in Palestine, as in other Eastern lands.

The King of Persia rises at dawn,—performs his devotions,—holds a cabinet council,—and then has a public reception, whereat, as part of his business, he hears suits, and bestows rewards and penalties.

"*Stood beside the way of the gate.*"—It was the custom to transact public business, and to try causes, at the gates of towns. Of this we have numerous instances in the Old Testament,—e.g. Abraham's bargain for the field of Ephron, and the transference to Boaz of Ruth's next kinsman's obligations to her, were both settled in the gate.

The reasons of this practice seem to have been:—

1. That all might have easy access to the court.
2. That, as the gate was a place where numbers of persons passed and assembled, plenty of witnesses might be obtained to transactions. This was im-

portant, because there were then few written records. Thus we find Boaz saying to elders and people, "*Ye are witnesses this day.*"

3. That this public administration of justice might inspire confidence in the judges' integrity.
4. That the Hebrews being engaged chiefly in agriculture, and going in the early morning to their work, it was most convenient for them to have their causes settled on their way out. After the establishment of the Monarchy in Israel, the *King's* court was held *in the room over the gate of his palace*, in the capital, while the magistrates in all other places continued their sittings at the open gates of their cities, or towns. But it is scarcely likely that Absalom stationed himself in the royal justice-room, for had he acted and spoken as represented in the text, in his own father's house, he would, inevitably, have betrayed, and foiled, his design. He would seem, (as the text suggests), to have taken post on the "*way*" *leading to the palace*, so as to be in a position to address, without his father's knowledge, those who were going to present their suits to him.

v. 3. "*But there is no man deputed of the King to hear thee.*"—This speech seems to indicate that it was generally known that David himself had ceased to attend to public business, and had delegated that function to others: the words, (if we regard Absalom as telling the truth in uttering them), shew, also, that at this time the King had grown so neglectful that he not only held no court himself, but that he had ceased to appoint a vice-gerent.

v. 7. "*Forty years,*"—should be "*four years,*" which is the reading of the Syriac, the Arabic, and other versions, —and of Josephus. The meaning is *four years after Absalom's return to Jerusalem*: during two of these, David would not see him, and the other two he spent in paving the way for his Revolt.

"*In Hebron.*"—The men of Judah, chafing "under their absorption into one great kingdom," seem to have lost their former burning loyalty to David, and to have fallen into a mutinous state. Hence the fact that Absalom chose this tribe wherein to raise his standard,—doubtless promising to grant them, (should he mount the throne), that preëminence which they considered their due.

He could have done nothing better calculated to gain, at the outset, powerful support.

Having fixed upon Judah as the scene of commencing operations, he made Hebron, the old capital of David's kingdom, his abode, partly to please the tribe, and partly because the inhabitants being embittered against David, for removing his capital to Jerusalem, he felt sure of their supporting him.

v. 11. "*Two hundred men*,"—probably of high position.

"*They went . . . anything*,"—i.e., they knew nothing of Absalom's *real* purpose, having been invited, most probably, to witness the performance of his vow, and to aid therein.

This was a most ingenious and effective *ruse*, for these two hundred distinguished men would, of course, when Absalom set up his standard, be regarded as supporters of his cause, and so give it *prestige*, while, at the same time, dispiriting David and party.

v. 12. "*Ahithophel*,"—grandfather of Bathsheba, being father of *her* father, Eliam. In this relationship, we have a clue to his desertion of David. Whether the king's conduct *in re* Bathsheba and Uriah had become known to him, or not, the shrewd counsellor would form a pretty correct view of the affair, and, while maintaining apparent cordiality with David, would be on the look-out for an opportunity of avenging the wrong done to his house. The chance now presented itself in Absalom's Rebellion, and Ahithophel eagerly embraced it.

It may appear remarkable that Ahithophel should have joined, *for any reason whatever*, a plot for securing the accession of Absalom to the throne that was known to be destined for Solomon, his own great-grandson.

His apparently inconsistent conduct may, however, be explained, on the supposition that *he had not the slightest intention of attempting to establish Absalom in the kingdom*. He knew that Solomon had been divinely appointed his father's successor, and that, consequently, should the Rebellion issue, as he hoped, in David's death, Jehovah would carry out his purpose, and no earthly power would be able to place Absalom on the throne.

Thus, by allying himself to the rebel cause, Ahithophel would, in case of its success, not only not *injure* Bathsheba's son, but actually *benefit* him, by hastening his

accession,—while, at the same time, he would avenge himself upon David.

"*The Gilonite*,"—i.e., a native of Giloh, a town in the "mountains of Judah."

v. 14. "*Let us flee*."—That David should have proposed this course shows how powerful was the tide in favour of Absalom.

v. 16. "*Concubines*,"—i.e., secondary wives.

v. 18. "*Cherethites*,"—"Pelethites,"—will be treated of hereafter.

"*Gittites*,"—i.e., natives of Gath in *Philistia*.

"*The Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath*."—It is nowhere recorded under what circumstances these Gittites had left their native city, and land. We have only the statement of the text that they "came after" David "from Gath." It may be inferred, also, that they had not been with him long, for he says to Ittai, "Thou camest *but yesterday*."

Two explanations of their *status* have been proposed:—

1. They were mercenaries, who had entered David's service, induced by the prospect of booty.

This seems very unlikely, for we find David urging them to return home, at a time when their aid would prove invaluable, and using as an argument to induce that return, that it would be very unbecoming for him to allow them, strangers and *exiles*, lately arrived, to share the vicissitudes of his uncertain lot,—language altogether out of place in addressing hired auxiliaries!

2. They were exiles, voluntary or otherwise, from their "lordship," and had lately come to Jerusalem to ask David's hospitality, as he, and *his* 600 men, had, in the days of *his* exile, asked, and obtained, an asylum in Gath, at the hands of Achish.

This seems the correct view, agreeing as it does, in every particular, with the conversation between David and Ittai.

v. 19. "*Abide with the king*,"—i.e., the king of Gath. David urges Ittai to return, and compound his difference with that monarch.

The resemblance between this episode, and one, just alluded to, in David's career, is noteworthy:—

Both David and Ittai were exiles;—each had 600 followers;—David took refuge in Gath,—Ittai and his men

came from Gath, and took refuge with David;—David accompanied Achish, when the latter went up to battle against Saul;—Ittai accompanied David, when the war with Absalom commenced;—Achish sent David back,—David pressed Ittai to return. (The analogy is only partial in this last item, for Achish was compelled against his wish, by his fellow “lords,” to dismiss David, and the latter actually went back to Ziklag: David, actuated by kind feeling only, wished Ittai to return, but the Philistine leader refused to do so.)

v. 22. “*Pass over*,”—i.e., over the ravine of Kidron, (or Cedron), which is a winter-torrent, its bed becoming dry, or nearly so, during the hot months.

“*All the little ones*.”—Naturally, the children of those accompanying David in his flight would be placed under the care of the armed force.

v. 23. “*The wilderness*,”—of Judæa.

v. 24. “*And, lo! Zadok . . . out of the city*.”—It is impossible to make out from this passage, and its context, in what order David’s party advanced. Perhaps the meaning is this:—Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites (carrying the Ark), led the van; next came the forces (with the children in charge); and David, with the non-military portion of his adherents, brought up the rear. It would appear that when the city boundaries were reached by the head of the procession, David ordered Zadok and Abiathar, with their sons, to carry the Ark back into the city,—that the Ark then fell out of the procession, and was set down, Zadok, (and, probably, Ahimaaz, and Jonathau), also quitting the ranks, and standing by the sacred chest, while Abiathar continued to head the company until all had passed the boundaries: then he, also, fell out, and, retracing his steps, joined Zadok and the two young men,—and the four together carried back the Ark into Jerusalem.

It does not appear that any of the *Levites* returned to the City with the Ark.

v. 27. “*Seer*.”—We find in I. Sam. ix. 9, this passage,—“(Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is now called* a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)”

This parenthesis was doubtless interpolated by Ezra, who compiled the Canon. We gather from it that the term *Seer*

was in Samuel's days applied to those who were afterwards denominated *Prophets*. They appear to have been called *Seers*, because God's special revelations were made to them in *visions* and *dreams*.

The literal meaning of *Prophet* is a *forth-speaker*. The name was given to those formerly called seers, because they *spoke forth* the special revelations made to them of God's will and purposes.

David evidently believed that if Zadok remained at Jerusalem, with the Ark, God might make to him revelations of the rebels' purposes, which he could then forward to him for his benefit.

v. 28. "*The plain of the wilderness*,"—the Valley of the Jordan, whose extent will be more easily comprehended from the map than from a verbal description.

v. 30. "*His head covered*,"—i.e., his face wrapped in his robes. This was a most significant mode of mourning amongst the Israelites,—betokening a grief so bitter and deep that it would conceal its expression.

v. 31. "*Turn . . . foolishness*,"—an expression based on the meaning of the name *Ahithophel*, which = *brother of foolishness*, i.e., *foolish*.

v. 32. "*The Archite*,"—a native of Arka, a small Phœnician colony from Sidon; Arka, or Acra, lay between Tripolis and Antaradus, at the western base of Lebanon. In Solomon's reign this state was under his yoke. In his case, and that of Uriah, Ittai, and others, we have proof that heathen descent was no bar to political and military service to the Hebrew state under David.

Some make Hushai a native of Erech, one of Nimrod's cities, on the E. of the Euphrates,—half-way between its junction with the Tigris, and the ruins of Babylon.

"*His coat*,"—the outer garment.

v. 33. "*Thou shalt be a burden unto me*,"—This was not said unkindly, for David evidently highly esteemed Hushai. The king meant that the "burden" would consist in his feeling that he would, if the Archite accompanied him, be, perhaps, involving a dear friend in his own probable ruin.

At first sight it may seem strange that Absalom should have been able to turn nearly all Israel to himself, and against his father, by, apparently, only his good looks, and

his plausible promises. There were, however, deeper influences at work on his behalf:—

1. David's military despotism, and his apathetic disregard of his duties, had temporarily estranged his people from him.
2. The Hebrews, like Orientals generally, preferred a young, active monarch, to an old and enfeebled one, and, being strongly in favor of succession by primogeniture, favored the claim of Absalom to that of Solomon, whom David, by Divine direction, had made his heir.

CHAPTER XVI.

David continues his flight,—Ziba meets him with food and two asses; falsely declares that Mephibosheth has joined the revolt; and is endowed by David, with all his master's property,—Shimei curses David, and casts stones at him, the King refusing to allow Abishai to fall upon him.—Absalom, with Ahithophel and a large body of followers, reaches Jerusalem,—is met by Hushai, who, feigning to be on his side, is welcomed by him.—By the advice of Ahithophel, Absalom appropriates David's concubines.

v. 1. "*A little past the top of the hill*,"—i.e., on the Eastern slope of Olivet.

"*Summer-fruits*,"—indicates, probably, those succulent fruits which are in season during the hot months, and which are then so gratefully refreshing. The name was given to them either on account of their time of ripening, or because they were not salvable for winter use: many of them would be of the melon and cucumber kind.

"*A bottle*,"—i.e., a skin.

v. 2. "*The young men*,"—a Hebraism for warriors.

"*To-day . . . of my father.*"—This was such a lame representation, that David, had not his faculties been numbed, must, from it, have instantly seen Ziba's treachery. The rebellion was so palpably intended to elevate *Absalom* to the throne, that Mephibosheth could not possibly have dreamed that the Israelites would make *him* King.

v. 4. "*All*,"—i.e., all the property. David's ready belief of Ziba, and summary confiscation of Mephibosheth's property, are extremely unworthy of him, and form one of the blots on his reign.

v. 7. "*Thou bloody man.*"—David had not as yet been the cause of the death of any of Saul's house: on the contrary, he had twice spared Saul,—had slain the murderers of Ishbosheth,—and had dealt munificently by Mephibosheth. But as he had superseded Saul's house on the throne, Shimei, in his unreasoning madness of hatred, attributes to the monarch the blood of Saul's family that had been shed in bringing about the change of dynasty. If, too, the murder of Uriah *had* become public, Shimei may have alluded to that infamous deed in thus stigmatizing the King.

"*Man of Belial*,"—a term of the bitterest reproach amongst the Jews, equivalent to calling one *an infamous, and shamelessly abandoned wretch*.

v. 9. "*Dead dog.*"—The "dog" here meant is the mangy, ownerless, savage, cur that abounds in Eastern cities, appearing in troops after dark, "making night hideous" with unearthly howls, and devouring the offal of the streets, and even the flesh of human corpses, which it, and the jackal, disinter. These dogs were regarded by the Jews as horribly defiling animals. The epithet "*dead dog*," then, called up such a disgustingly revolting set of ideas, as to render it a most bitter and favourite term of abuse with Orientals, who excel the rest of the world in this department of language.

v. 10. "*What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah.*"—We find David declaring, on the occasion of Joab's slaying Abner, that the sons of Zeruiah, (i.e., Abishai and Joab,—for Zeruiah's third son Asahel was dead), were "too hard" for him. In the text we see him again rebuking Abishai for his eagerness to shed blood. In this, and his succeeding treatment of the two valiant brothers,

David was most unjust. They were devoted to his person and interests, and faithful to the fortunes of his house, (excepting in the case of Joab's joining in the conspiracy to place Adonijah on the throne); yet he constantly treated them with abuse, insult, and injustice. His professed horror at their blood-thirstiness, especially, is almost ludicrously inconsistent, as coming from the cold-blooded assassin of Uriah, and would-be slayer of Nabal, (for refusing supplies to him and his robber troop!)

"*The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.*"—David, in his broken and humiliated state, was ready to accept meekly every untoward event as coming directly from God's retributive hand, in correction for his great crime. He accordingly bears submissively, from Shimei, insults that on another occasion he would have promptly avenged. His idea in this matter was, probably, unfounded; at any rate his abstinence from inflicting punishment on this abuser of "the Lord's anointed" was not kingly, or wise, savouring, as it must have done, of fear and despair, and therefore well qualified to disgust his followers, and encourage his enemies.

v. 13. "*The hill's side,*"—the slope of Olivet. Bahurim was not far from the eastern foot of that hill, on the road Jordanwards.

"*Threw stones,*"—not in those days the undignified act it has now become. Homer represents his greatest heroes, (e.g. Diomedes, Ajax, Hector, and Agamemnon), as pelting their foes with stones.

"*Cast dust.*"—This was a common abusive symbol, being intended to signify the desire of the thrower that the person assailed would speedily be mouldering to dust in his grave.

v. 14. "*Came,*"—into the Jordan Valley, where David had before planned to await the issue of events.

v. 15. "*Came to Jerusalem,*"—and, it appears, took immediate and unopposed possession of the throne. The success with which the first steps of this rebellion were attended has scarcely a parallel in history.

v. 17. "*Is this thy kindness to thy friend?*" (i.e. David).—Absalom had no doubt of *Ahithophel's* sincerity: he had even sent for him, (knowing, there is no question, of his secret feelings towards David); but this adhesion of *Hushai*, (who had been David's bosom friend, and owed him no

grudge), to the rebel prince, staggered the latter, and roused in him suspicions of the Archite's sincerity towards himself, —suspicions, however, soon dismissed from the light and frivolous mind of the usurper. Hushai appears, indeed, (to judge from the words recorded), to have rather overshot the mark, and to have greeted Absalom with too great effusion not to excite the latter's momentary doubts.

v. 21. "*All Israel . . . thee be strong.*"—Ahithophel here proves himself the consummately wise counsellor he was esteemed to be. To appropriate David's harem was the most decisive step possible to shew that Absalom had seized the crown; while, at the same time, the act utterly precluded all idea of reconciliation between David and his son, and compelled the latter to prosecute his undertaking to the bitter end: thus his followers were both encouraged and driven to support him most strenuously,—for any fear they might have entertained of being, perhaps, abandoned and betrayed by Absalom, was at an end from the moment he so utterly committed himself,—while, at the same time, they realized that *now*, should the undertaking fail, there was no quarter to be expected from David.

v. 22. "*In the sight of all Israel,*" — thus fulfilling Nathan's prediction,—“I will take thy wives before thine eyes, (*i.e.* openly), and give them unto thy neighbour, . . . I will do this thing *before all Israel*, and before the sun.”

CHAPTER XVII.

Ahithophel advises the instant pursuit of David, —Hushai recommends that the attack shall be postponed until overwhelming forces can be mustered,—Hushai's advice taken; Ahithophel hangs himself.—Jonathan and Ahimaaz are sent, with the news, to David, whom they reach, after a narrow escape of falling into the hands of Absalom.—David passes over the Jordan.—Absalom, having made Amasa his generalissimo, follows.—

At Mahanaim, Shobi, and others, bring provisions to David.

v. 1. "*Moreover.*"—It would appear from the use of this word, here, that Ahithophel's proposal to pursue David was made at the same Council whereat he recommended that Absalom should appropriate David's harem. Some, however, think that two councils were held, and that Hushai had not reached Jerusalem at the time that the first was held, and the harem business settled.

Those who hold this view base it upon the fact that Hushai's advice was not asked about the concubines, which, they allege, would not have been the case had he been then at Jerusalem.

This, however, is a feeble argument, for, if we grant that there *were* two consultations, it is clear that Hushai was not present at the *commencement* of the second, for we read that, *after Ahithophel's proposal to pursue the king had been discussed, and approved, Absalom suggests*, as if the idea had just struck him, *the sending for Hushai*, and asking *his* advice on the point.

As, then, it is clear that Hushai's being sent for was an afterthought, when the Council had been some time assembled, there is no reason why the question about the harem should not have been settled at the same sitting, before the idea of asking his opinion occurred to Absalom. And that this was the case seems clear from the words of Ahithophel,—“I will arise, and pursue after David, *this night*,” meaning, almost certainly, *the very night after Absalom's reaching Jerusalem*.

It is probable that Hushai's advice would not have been asked at all, had it not occurred to Absalom that the Archite had not long left David, and would therefore be able to give an opinion based upon the King's actual circumstances, which Ahithophel, coming direct from Gilon to Hebron, and thence, with Absalom, to Jerusalem, was not in a position to do.

v. 3. "*The man whom thou seekest, (i.e., David), is as if all returned,*"—meaning that, if David were slain, all his forces would at once give in their adhesion to Absalom, which there seems no reason to doubt; but, as has been already stated, Ahithophel doubtless felt perfectly sure

that Jehovah would prevent Absalom's accession, and secure Solomon's, so that he did not hesitate to give the best possible advice to the usurper, knowing that the submission of David's supporters would not place the rebel on the throne, while the adoption of his proposal would yield him the vengeance he sought, for there is not the slightest room for doubt that, had he been allowed to pursue David, the latter must inevitably have been overwhelmed, and have suffered the doom intended for him.

v. 4. "*All the elders of Israel*,"—excepting those accompanying David; the use of the word "all" here shews what a formidable revolt this must have been, since it was supported by a vast majority of the chiefs of the nation.

v. 7. "*At this time*,"—"this" being here emphatic. Hushai would salve over the wound he is about to inflict in impugning his rival's judgment, and so says, in effect,—"*Ahithophel's counsel is usually wise and good; but this time, just this once, his proverbial keenness is at fault.*"

v. 8. "*A bear . . . field.*"—The Syrian bear here meant is a variety of the brown bear,—is of a fulvous brown or white,—has long straight hair, with short wool next the skin, and a bristling mane about 4 in. high,—and eats animal and vegetable food. The bear is now almost extinct in Palestine. The female when "robbed of her whelps" is, without exception, the "most awful example of animal rage, . . . unswerving vengeance, and unconquerable energy," which she exhibits even to the very moment of death.

v. 13. "*Then shall . . . found there*,"—an exaggeration of what actually occurred in ancient sieges.—Hooks, or grappling-irons were attached to ropes, and thrown so as to gain a hold on the fortifications of a city; immense pulling force was exerted on the rope; and the walls were thus torn down piece-meal.

Hushai, speaking with grandiloquent hyperbole, represents Absalom as possessing a force so numerous and powerful, as to be able to drag a city, bodily, and at one effort, into the Jordan, and that so effectually that not the smallest stone should be left behind to mark the site of the place.

The tone of Hushai's address to Absalom should be noted. It is the very antipodes of Ahithophel's brief, pregnant, counsels, with a solid reason appended to each. But Hushai read Absalom's disposition correctly, and suit-

ing his manner of speech to his chief auditor, he sets forth his pretended opinion in glowing, flowery, and bombastic periods, well calculated to excite, and carry away, the vain, empty-heated, coxcomb with whom he had to deal.—His advice, and reasons, are simply absurd, and utterly illogical, and had not his hearers been blinded by the glamour of his words, they could not have failed to see the folly of his counsels, and the motives actuating him. But “the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel,” and so the spell of the Archite remained upon the shallow Absalom, and his chief supporters, who, like all Orientals, are easily influenced by facile, poetic, and highly-strained, oratory.

v. 23. “*Ahithophel hanged himself*,”—partly because he was mortally chagrined, and partly because his clear vision shewed him that the following out of Hushai’s counsel would end in utter ruin for Absalom’s cause, thus defeating his own cherished, and nearly accomplished, schemes of vengeance, and placing him at the mercy of the monarch whom he had so deeply injured.

The treachery of Ahithophel, and that of Judas Iscariot, and their respective deaths, present a remarkable analogy, —*Ahithophel* being indeed *the Old Testament type of Judas*, as David was of Christ.

v. 16. “*Pass over*,”—i.e., over Jordan.

“*Lest . . . are with him*.”—Though it had been decided to follow Hushai’s counsel, the latter, knowing Absalom to be changeable, thought it well to provide against the contingency of Ahithophel’s advice being yet acted upon, and therefore urged David not to stay where, in that case, he must be “overwhelmed.”

v. 17. “*En-rogel*” = *foot-fountain*; the Targum interprets it “*Fullers’ Fountain*,” because the fullers used to tread the clothes there with their feet.

Some think it is the same as the *Pool of Siloam*, at the S.E. corner of Jerusalem; others find in it the *Well of Nehemiah*, or, as the natives call it, the *Well of Job*, which lies just below the Pool of Siloam, at the junction of the Valley of Hinnom with that of Jehoshaphat. The latter seems the correct position.

v. 18. “*A well*,”—either an ordinary well, or a water-tank,—most likely the latter; it was, probably, at the time, quite, or nearly, dry.

"*In his court*,"—i.e., the court-yard round which the house was built.

v. 20. "*The brook of water*,"—the Kidron.

v. 23. "*Mahanaim*,"—Ishbosheth's former capital.

"*Absalom passed over Jordan*,"—not immediately after David, but, as Hushai had advised, when he had collected a large force from the whole country. The delay had proved, as Hushai had intended, of priceless value to the king. He found welcome, refreshment, and, best of all, adequate forces; for the tribes E. of Jordan, whose valour was conspicuous, came flocking to his standard, until, with them, and his followers who had come with him from Jerusalem, he found himself in a position to take the field, with good hope of success.

v. 25. "*Amasa*,"—has not been hitherto mentioned. David seems to have entirely passed him over, though he was related to him in just the same degree as "the sons of Zeruiah." This neglect on David's part was sufficient ground for Amasa's joining Absalom.

"*Ithra*,"—called "*Jether*," in I. Chron.

"*An Israelite*,"—"the *Ishmeelite*," in I. Chron. "*Israelite*" is, doubtless an error for "*Ishmaelite*."—Perhaps Abigail, Amasa's mother, having married an Ishmaelite, caused a breach with her family: thence may have come David's overlooking his nephew.

"*Abigail, the daughter of Nahash*,"—Abigail was sister of David, the son of *Jesse*: how, then, comes she to be called the daughter of *Nahash*? To meet the difficulty, we may suppose *Jesse* to have had a second name, *Nahash*;—or we may regard Abigail as being the daughter of David's mother by another husband, *Nahash*, to whom she had been married before she espoused *Jesse*.

The latter seems the better solution, since it makes Abigail David's *half*-sister, which, if we regard Zeruiah as his full sister, on both sides, is a sufficient reason for David's partiality towards Joab and Abishai, and his neglect of Amasa.

v. 27. "*Shobi, the son of Nahash*,"—was, probably, successor of the brutal Hanun. The Ammonites must have been a fine, generous, race: for David had beaten them, and reduced them to abject service, (or, perhaps, put them to horrible torture), in the late war with them; yet we

find them entertaining him most hospitably, in his hour of adversity.

v. 28. "*Lentiles*."—The lentile, (*Ervum lens*), is the smallest of the cultivated *Leguminosæ*, bearing, in each pod, two or three small seeds. It is used in the E. chiefly in pottage, (like that for which Esau sold his birth-right), and also, mixed with barley, (or alone, in times of scarcity), to make bread.

"*Pulse*,"—is not the original: what appears to be meant is a mixture of beans, peas, wheat, and other grain, first parched, and then passed through the mill.

v. 29. "*Cheese of kine*,"—as distinguished from that made from the milk of sheep and goats.

CHAPTER XVIII.

David sends forth his army, in three divisions, with orders to spare Absalom.—Absalom is defeated in the "Wood of Ephraim," and being caught in a tree, is slain by Joab, and buried in a pit.—Absalom's "pillar."—Cushi and Ahimaaz bring tidings to David of the result of the battle.—The king laments Absalom.

v. 6. "*The wood of Ephraim*,"—E. of the Jordan, near Mahanaim. It probably took its name from being in the vicinity of the spot where Jephthah's slaughter of the Ephraimites occurred.

It may have been so called, however, from another circumstance.—The Jews believe that Joshua gave the Ephraimites the right to pasture their flocks in the territory of any of the other tribes, and, accordingly, represent the name "Wood of Ephraim" as belonging to a district E. of the Jordan which that tribe had employed for pasturing over.

v. 8. "*The battle . . . them the sword devoured*."—These results naturally followed from the character of the battle-field, chosen, by Joab, with great good judgment,—it being then, as now, a region "covered with thick oaks,

and tangled bushes, and thorny creepers, growing over rugged rocks and ruinous precipices." Skilfully drawn, by Joab, into this "wood," and hemmed and "entangled in the thick undergrowth," fighting in regular order was out of the question for Absalom's army, whose superior numbers only contributed to hinder retreat, and increase the carnage.

v. 9. "*Oak*,"—or "*terebinth-tree*," (probably the *Pistachia terebinthus*). This accident to Absalom is easily accounted for, since in this "*Wood*," "the strong arms of the trees spread out so near the ground that one cannot walk erect beneath them."

"*His head*,"—i.e., the long hair of his head.

v. 11. "*A girdle*,"—more correctly "*baldric*," or "*belt*": it was of leather, studded with plates, or bosses, of metal. When the armour was light, it was girt round the hips: otherwise it was worn cross-wise from shoulder to hip, and held the sword.

v. 15. "*That bare Joab's armour*."—The function of the "armour-bearer" was not only to carry the commander's shield, spear, bow, &c., but to convey orders for him, and, particularly, to attend closely upon him during a battle.

v. 16. "*Joab held back the people*,"—knowing that Absalom's death virtually ended the rebellion, and that the return of the revolted to their allegiance would be facilitated by staying the slaughter, and so letting them see that Absalom alone, not his deluded followers, was the object of his resentment.

v. 17. "*Laid a very great heap of stones upon him*."—It is generally represented that this was intended as a mark of dishonour: that he was subjected, after death, to the penalty of stoning, which was the punishment awarded by the Law to a rebellious son.

But there is no ground for this assertion, for raising a mound of stones over a corpse can by no means be regarded as the same thing as stoning a living being to death.

The simple purpose of this heap of stones was, as in all other cases of the kind, to serve as a "heap of witness,"—a memorial of the Rebellion, of which Absalom's death was the end.

v. 18. "*A pillar*,"—a lofty monument of some kind, not necessarily what we imply by the word.

"*The King's dale*,"—the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

"*Absalom's place*,"—rather Absalom's *hand*, i.e., "*Absalom's monument*," (a monument *pointing out*, or *distinguishing*, and so performing passively the function of the hand).

There stands, on the E. side of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, a monument generally regarded as being the one raised by Absalom, and therefore called *Absalom's Pillar*, or *Absalom's Tomb*.

Its pedestal consists of a square mass hewn out of the rock, having carved on its sides bastard Ionic columns, and on its architrave triglyphs and Doric ornaments. Above the architrave are two square layers of masonry of large stones,—the upper layer smaller than the lower: these are surmounted by a circular dome, running up into a round spire, whose top spreads out like an opening flame, or a lotus,—dome and spire, (which are of masonry), together having much the appearance of a champagne bottle from the middle upwards. The total height of the structure is about forty feet, twenty of which are included between base and architrave, and the rest from architrave to summit.

In the body of the structure is an excavated chamber, shewing that the building was adapted for a sepulchre.

Now, it is certain that the structure as it now stands could not have been the work of Absalom's age, much of the architecture being of later date. If, then, this be Absalom's "pillar," (and there is reason to believe it *is*), it would seem that the original monument of Absalom's construction consisted of the square mass of rock, (surmounted, probably, by a pyramidal dome),—and that the columns, triglyphs, Doric ornaments, and superincumbent masonry, from architrave to summit, were added at a later period.

It is most likely that Absalom intended to be buried in this monument; but it is not at all probable that his body was ever moved from its grave in the "Wood of Ephraim," for such a proceeding would be altogether repugnant to Jewish notions.

It was, and probably still is, (though modern travellers do not notice the fact), the custom for both Jewish and Mahommedan passers-by to throw each a stone in front of Absalom's Pillar. This practice *may be*, (although the rearing of the heap over his corpse was *not*), a mark of horror and detestation at the crime of the prince; or it

may be simply, (as in the case of the mound over his grave), in memory of the Rebellion; or, finally, it may be that the stones are regarded as thrown at Satan, for instigating Absalom to his wicked act, (just as the Mahommedan pilgrims pelt the Devil at Arafat, where, they assert, he tempted Adam and Abraham).

v. 20. "*Thou shalt . . . the king's son is dead.*"—Though Joab had had the courage to disobey David, (for that monarch's own good), in slaying Absalom, he appears now to shrink from letting him know the result of the battle, foreseeing how the news would be received.

Or, we may understand from his reply to Ahimaaz that, for some reason or other, he did not wish to let the young priest carry to David the tidings of Absalom's death, though he would readily send him with any news that might hereafter require conveyance to the king.

v. 21. "*Then said Joab . . . thou hast seen.*"—Following the suppositions just made, we must imagine either that Joab changed his mind after refusing Ahimaaz, and determined to send the news to David that same day, or that, having some personal objection to Ahimaaz, he chose Cush, as messenger, in preference to the son of Zadok.

v. 22. "*Seeing that thou hast no tidings ready,*"—i.e., "no tidings" additional to those which Cush was bearing.

v. 23. "*Run.*"—Whatever may have been Joab's reason for hitherto refusing Ahimaaz, and sending another, it can be readily understood that, Cush having got a fair start, Joab should petulantly yield to the persistence of Ahimaaz, not thinking that he would arrive first.

"*The way of the Plain.*"—Probably he crossed the Jordan near the Jabbok,—and made straight for Jerusalem by the lower part of the Valley of the Jordan;—while Cush, keeping to the E. of the Jordan, would, most likely, pass the river opposite Jericho: Ahimaaz would thus have a clearer, and, apparently, a shorter route, besides having the advantage of superior swiftness.

v. 24. "*Between the two gates.*"—The entrance to Mahanaim was evidently through a gate-way closed by the "two gates" of the text,—one of these "outward, facing the suburbs, and one inward, facing the town."

David sat in the gate-way, along whose sides there would be, for the use of those "sitting in the gate," either a raised stone ledge, or niches hollowed out.

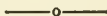
"*The roof over the gate, unto the wall.*"—The gate, then, must have been very high, with a flat top, and battlements (called in the text "the wall"),—and so served the purpose of the watch-towers of our own old castles.

v. 25. "*Told the king.*"—From the succeeding statement that "the watchman called unto the porter," we gather how David was "told" by the former. He called aloud from the roof of the gate to the porter, (whose business it was to open and close the gates), below, and the latter then conveyed the news to David where he sat between the two gates.

v. 29. "*When Joab . . . what it was.*"—This was a falsehood, since Ahimaaz well knew what the "tumult" meant, and that Absalom was dead: consideration for David's feelings restrained him from uttering the truth.

v. 32. "*The enemies . . . that young man is,*"—an indirect, but clearly significant, method of announcing Absalom's death.

EPITOME OF LIFE OF ABSALOM.



"*Absalom*" = *father of peace.*

David's third son, by Maachah, daughter of Talmai, King of Geshur.

B.C.

? Born, at Hebron.

1030. Slays Amnon, and flees to Geshur.

1027. Joab, by means of the "woman of Tekoa," obtains David's consent to Absalom's return from exile.

1025. Absalom compels Joab to intercede with David for his return to Court; and is, in consequence, received openly by his father.

(Prepares the way for his Rebellion).

1023. Obtains leave to go to Hebron,—sets up there the standard of Revolt,—is joined by large forces,—Ahithophel comes to him.

David quits Jerusalem, leaving ten concubines behind,—Absalom enters the City,—appropriates the concubines,—listens to the counsel of Hushai, and delays his pursuit of David, who, informed of what has happened, passes over Jordan.

Absalom crosses the Jordan,—joins battle with David's army,—is defeated in the "Wood of Ephraim,"—is caught by the hair in a terebinth-tree,—slain by Joab,—and buried in a pit, in the Wood.

Character.—Handsome, and of winning presence and speech.—Not wanting in courage, but possessing no military talent.—Vain, ambitious, and unstable, (having no will of his own, but depending entirely upon advisers, and supporters).

The cause of his Rebellion was, doubtless, his fear lest Solomon should succeed to the throne. Amnon, the heir by primogeniture, (which was generally observed in the E.), he had slain, (perhaps as much with a view to getting him out of his way, as to revenge Tamar); Chileab was, doubtless, dead; Absalom was thus David's eldest son living, and, therefore, heir by descent. David had the prerogative of passing him over, did he choose so to do, in favour of any younger son, but the King would certainly not so act to his favourite, had he only his own will to consult.

Thus far, then, there was no difficulty in the way of his accession, *at David's death*, for which he would doubtless have waited, had he not known that God, (who, by the terms of the Theocratic Monarchy, must ratify the choice of the king, and could alter the succession at will), had ordained Solomon to succeed his father.

Feeling that David might live many years yet, until Solomon should be a man, and able to assert himself, Absalom saw no way of securing the crown than by making a bold stroke for it at once.

His plan seems to have included the murder of his father; and, if he could lend himself to parricide, there seems little doubt that he intended the slaughter of Solomon also.

CHAPTER XIX. 1-40.

David's followers are dispirited by his excessive grief;—Joab angrily expostulates, and the King shews himself amongst the people.
—The "tribes of Israel" consult about re-

calling him to his kingdom.—David himself sends to Zadok and Abiathar to urge them to stir up Judah to invite his return, promising to grant a general amnesty, and to make Amasa generalissimo in place of Joab.—Judah send the King word to return.—On reaching Jordan, he is met by (1.) Shimei, whom he pardons; (2.) Ziba and Mephibosheth, the latter exculpating himself from the charge of treason, and David restoring him half his property; and (3.) Barzillai, whom the King urges to come and dwell with him, at Jerusalem: he refuses, but commends to David's notice his son, Chimham, who is accordingly received into the royal favour.—David crosses Jordan, with his followers,—Barzillai blesses him, and returns home, Chimham remaining with the King.

The conduct of David in secluding himself from his victorious supporters, and mourning for Absalom, instead of shewing himself publicly, and rejoicing in, and congratulating the people upon, the result of the battle, was most inconsistent, ungrateful, and impolitic, and, had not Joab, with great firmness, insisted upon his shewing himself, there is no doubt that the king's followers would have deserted him, and his restoration never have been effected.

v. 13. "*And say ye to Amasa, 'Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh'?*"—David had never remembered this during the whole of his reign, up to the present moment, when Amasa promises to be useful to his cause.

"*God do so . . . continually in the room of Joab.*"—This elevation of Amasa to Joab's post was intended, by David, as a punishment of the latter for slaying Absalom,

and an assurance to the late insurgents of the promised amnesty. It was an unjust and foolish act on David's part,—unjust, because Joab had remained faithful to his monarch, and saved his throne, while Amasa had joined, and commanded, the rebels:—foolish, because it made an enemy of Joab henceforth, and because Amasa was totally unequal to the post.

v. 14. "*He bowed . . . Judah.*"—"He" refers here, there is no doubt, to Amasa, not to David.

v. 18. "*A ferry-boat,*"—a mistranslation! The passage should read, "And these, (*i.e.*, those persons just before mentioned), went over Jordan before the king, and *performed the service* of bringing over the king's household," instead of, "And there went over a *ferry-boat* to carry over the king's household."

The Rabbins say that the men carried the women and children across on their backs.

v. 20. "*The house of Joseph.*"—Shimei was of the tribe of Benjamin, Joseph's only brother by their mother Rachel.

v. 23. "*Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.*"—David dealt very treacherously with Shimei, spite of this oath. He kept it in *letter*, but not in *spirit*, for, when on his death-bed, he reminded Solomon how Shimei had cursed him, and how he had promised him, "*I will not put thee to death with the sword.*"—and proceeds, "Now, therefore, hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but *his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood*!" In consequence of this command, Solomon bade Shimei to remain a close prisoner in his house, threatening him with death should he cross the Kidron. After three years' obedience to the order, Shimei went to Gath to recover two runaway servants: and Solomon, on his return, caused him to be slain by Benaiah.

v. 24. "*The son,*"—*i.e.*, descendant.

"*Had neither dressed his feet,*"—*i.e.*, either neglected some special medical attention that his lame feet might have required, or did not wash them,—the latter being a most significant token of grief, as the most scrupulous attention was accustomed to be paid to the cleanliness of these members.

"*Nor trimmed his beard,*"—another significant sign of mourning, for the beard was the object of the utmost care,

as it still is in the E., being constantly combed, perfumed, and anointed.

v. 26. "*My servant*,"—Ziba.

"*I will saddle . . . King*."—The verse is vague, as it stands, for Mephibosheth does not say what was the intent, or issue, of his purpose of saddling an ass, and going to the king. He means, it would seem, that he had, on hearing of the rebellion, contemplated riding out to David to express his loyalty, and, probably, to offer those gifts afterwards brought by Ziba; but that the latter had treacherously dissuaded him from committing his feeble frame to such an undertaking, and had obtained his leave to go in his stead.

v. 29. "*I have said*,"—i.e., "*My final decision is*."

"*Thou and Ziba divide the land*,"—another hasty and unjust proceeding of David. Instead of enquiring fairly into the matter, and then restoring the whole property to Mephibosheth, who seems, without doubt, to have been in the right, David rashly concludes that it is, "six of one, and half a dozen of the other," and so disposes of the property in the same rough and ready style that we read of, in the judgments of Eastern potentates, in the "*Arabian Nights*."

v. 30. "*Let him take all . . . own house*."—Noble and generous language, worthy of the son of Jonathan, and well calculated to put David to the blush!

v. 32. "*A very great man*,"—i.e., "*a very rich man*."

v. 35. "*Singing men, and singing women*."—From this it would appear that David had, amongst the other delights of his court, instituted an orchestra, which had obtained a fame extending even to Barzillai, in Gilead.

v. 37. "*Thy servant Chimham*,"—son of Barzillai.

To the period of Absalom's Rebellion belong—

Psalms iii.; vii. (referring to Shimei's cursing); xiv.; xxviii.; xli. (referring specially to Absalom's and Abithophel's treachery,—"*Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me*,"—v. 9.); xlii., xliii., (formerly one Psalm); lv., [referring specially to Absalom and Abithophel,—

"*For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid*

myself from him: but *it was* thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked unto the house of God in company.

"He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. *The words* of his mouth were smother than butter, but war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords.

"But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee."—(vs. 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 23.)

The words, "*Bloody . . . days*" foretell with forcible correctness the end of the two traitors]; lxi.; lxii.; lxiv.; lxxi.; lxxxiv.; cxliii.

CHAPTERS XIX. 41-end; XX.

The men of Israel chide those of Judah for not affording them a more prominent share in bringing David back,—the latter angrily retort,—and the former revolt, under Sheba.—David, on reaching Jerusalem, places the ten concubines, whom Absalom had appropriated, in close seclusion.—He orders Amasa to assemble the forces of Judah, within three days, and to pursue Sheba.—Amasa not being ready at the fixed time, the King commits the enterprize to Abishai, who, with Joab, proceeds on the expedition.—David's forces meet Amasa's, in Gibeon, —Joab treacherously murders Amasa, and, assuming the chief command, continues the pursuit of Sheba, and besieges him in Abel-beth-Maachah, whose inhabitants, by the advice of "a wise woman," cut off the rebel's

head, and throw it over the wall:—Joab thereupon raises the siege, and returns to Jerusalem.

CHATER XIX.

v. 41. "*The men of Israel*,"—are now, for the first time, called *Israel*, as distinct from *Judah*.

v. 42. "*The king is near of kin to us*."—David was sprung from the tribe of Judah.

CHAPTER XX.

v. 1. "*We have no part in David*."—The transition from the assertion that they had *ten parts* in David, to the declaration that they had *none*, is natural enough. It is as if they replied sarcastically to Judah, "So you have a claim to David in comparison to which *we* have none. Very good! Then it shall be as you say,—'*We have no part in David*,' and owe him no allegiance."

"*Every man to his tents, O Israel!*"—This was the watch word of rebellion amongst the Hebrews.

v. 4. "*Then said the king . . . present*."—This was equivalent to investing Amasa with the command-in-chief that had been promised him.

v. 5. "*He tarried longer than the set time*,"—evidently because he failed to assemble the men of Judah; they were not very likely to desert their old and trusted leaders, Joab and Abishai, and follow the defeated rebel Amasa.

v. 6. "*Thy lord's servants*,"—i.e., the "mighty men."

"*Fenced cities*,"—i.e., fortified cities.

v. 7. "*Joab's men*."—Joab seems to have assembled a force, and joined his brother as a volunteer.

v. 8. "*The great stone which is in Gibeon*,"—may have been placed there after this event, to commemorate it; or it may have been already there, to mark the spot where Abner's and Joab's "young men" had fallen.

"*Amasa went before them*."—Amasa had, apparently, assembled some kind of force, and was now in pursuit of Sheba when thus overtaken by Joab and his brother.

"*Garment*,"—the outer robe.

"*It fell out*,"—i.e., out of the sheath. Josephus says Joab *purposely* let it fall, as he approached Amasa, that the latter might meet him just as he had picked it up, and

so might not be alarmed at Joab's saluting him while holding a sword. In order further to lull suspicion, Joab holds the weapon in the *left* hand.

v. 9. "*Joab took Amasa . . . to kiss him,*" (should be, "to kiss *it*," i.e., the beard).—It would have been an insult to have touched Amasa's beard, if Joab had intended to kiss any part of his face. Kissing the beard is "an exchange of respectful salutation between equals,"—each party, respectively, placing the *right* hand upon the other's beard, and lightly raising it to his lips.

v. 10. "*Amasa took no heed . . . Joab's hand.*"—It has been shewn that Joab's method of raising the sword from the ground was calculated to avert all suspicion on Amasa's part: when they came to a mutual beard-kissing, it is evident that Amasa was in such a position that, while sufficiently close for Joab to stab him, he actually could not see the weapon in the latter's grasp.

"*He died.*"—This was as cruel and cold-blooded a murder as that of Uriah, for, not only were Joab and Amasa cousins, but the former could not plead, as when he slaughtered Abner, the duty of blood-revenge, since Amasa had not killed any member of Joab's house,—his only offence against the latter being his superseding him in the chief command.

v. 12. "*Stood still,*"—being, naturally, riveted to the spot by the horrible and unexpected sight.

v. 13. "*Went on after Joab.*"—Joab had, evidently, now taken the sole command of the expedition.

v. 14. "*He,*"—Sheba.

"*They,*"—Joab and company.

v. 15. "*Abel of Beth-Maachah,*" — rather *Abel-Beth-Maachah*, (= *Abel near the city of Maachah*, so called to shew its vicinity to Maachah). It was named, also, *Abel*, or *Abel-Maim*, (= *Abel on the waters*, i.e., those of Merom). It was a very ancient, important, and flourishing, city, in Naphtali. 80 years after Sheba's rebellion it was taken, and sacked, by Benhadad; and, 200 years after, was again desolated, and its inhabitants sent captives into Assyria, by Tiglath-pileser.

"*They cast up a bank . . . and it stood in the trench.*" —This "*trench*" was not made by Joab, but by those who originally founded the city. "Taking advantage of an oblong knoll of natural rock, that rises above the sur-

rounding plain," they "raised a high mound sufficiently large for their city," thus forming a deep "*trench*," in which Joab raised his embankment. He would, doubtless, have found the siege long and trying, but for the "wise woman,"—for the "*trench*" and the wall, together, must have rendered Abel almost impregnable.

"*All the people battered the wall.*"—It is not stated whether this was done by means of engines, or whether the army of Joab discharged, by main strength, huge stones, in simultaneous showers, concentrated on some one spot. The latter would seem to be the more likely. The catapult and balista were used by Uzziah in defending Jerusalem; but they do not seem to have been known to the Jews in David's reign. Yet they *may* have been, and have been actually used by Joab on this occasion. He may, also, have employed a colossal lance, worked by manual force, under shelter of a pent-house,—an engine which may be regarded as the original and parent of the battering-ram. The method of working this lance was to drive its point between the stones of the wall.

vs. 16, 18. "*A wise woman.*"—"They were wont . . . ended the matter."—We have no means of ascertaining why Abel was celebrated for its inhabitants' wisdom. It was a common thing in ancient times for the people of certain places in different countries to have a reputation for wisdom, or its opposite. Tekoah appears, from an incident already noticed, to have been one of the Hebrew cities thus celebrated.

v. 19. "*A mother in Israel,*"—so called from its importance. In like manner we speak of our "*metropolis.*" The title may have been bestowed upon Abel, partly, also, from the fruitful character of the surrounding country.

Deborah, in her Song, celebrating Sisera's defeat, calls herself "*a mother in Israel,*" (because employing her authority with what might be regarded as a *maternal* affection and care for the people.)

EPITOME OF LIFE OF AMASA.

Amasa = *a burden*.

Son of Abigail, David's sister, (probably *half*-sister), by Jether, (or Ithra), an Ishmaelite.

His name does not occur before Absalom's rebellion.

(Some, however, think he is identical with *Amasai*, who, we are told in I. Chron., joined David, with a body of men from Judah and Benjamim, at Ziklag.

This is very improbable: had it been so, we should have found him acting a prominent part amongst David's great men, whereas, he is not even mentioned amongst the "*mighties*.")

B.C.

1023. Joins Absalom, and is made generalissimo of the rebel forces,—defeated in the Wood of Ephraim.—David promises to make him commander-in-chief, in place of Joab,—he, accordingly, successfully employs his influence to induce the people to invite the king's return.

1022. Entrusted with the assembling of forces to put down Sheba's revolt,—proves unable to collect them in time,—the pursuit is committed to Abishai, who, with Joab, sets out after the rebel,—Amasa meets the brothers at Gibeon,—treacherously assassinated there by Joab.

Character,—little apparent, since his part on the public stage was so short: ambition, treachery, fickleness, personal bravery, utter absence of military genius, are apparent,—nothing more.

CHAPTER XXI. 1-14.

Three years' famine,—David enquires the cause, and is told that it is a punishment for Saul's having slaughtered the Gibeonites,—David asks the latter what atonement they require,—they demand, and receive, seven of Saul's descendants, and crucify them on the Hill of Gibeah.—Rizpah watches the bodies, until David, hearing of her devotion, causes them, and the bones of Saul and Jonathan, to be burned in the sepulchre of Kish.—The famine is then stayed.

v. 1. "Year after year,"—i.e., the harvest turning out badly each year.

"David enquired of the Lord . . . the Gibeonites."—The question of David was, of course, put through the priests, and the answer was delivered through the same medium, and it is suspected that the reply, instead of being from the Lord, was concocted by the priests, in order to wreak their vengeance on the house of Saul for his massacre of them at Nob,—and that David acquiesced in the Gibeonites' demand, because he was desirous to see the house of Saul utterly destroyed, in order that his own son might peaceably succeed to the throne.

"He slew the Gibeonites."—When, and why, we know not. The Jews believe that it was at Nob, where some of them would be, as *Nethinim*. However this may be, it appears that he meditated their total destruction, for we find further on, the Gibeonites naming Saul as, "The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel." It is probable that Saul, finding that he had displeased Jehovah, by *sparing* a portion of the Amalekites, when ordered to destroy them all, purposed to atone for his fault, and shew his zeal by *exterminating* the Gibeonites, though Joshua had sworn that they should be spared. This view of the reason of Saul's purpose against them is shadowed forth a little further on,—*"Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah."*

v. 2. "The Gibeonites . . . sworn unto them."—Gibeon was the head of a confederacy of Hivite cities, the others being Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim. After Joshua's conquest of Jericho and Ai, the Gibeonites, alarmed for their own city, set to work to obtain, by craft, a treaty of peace with the invaders. Accordingly, they sent an embassy, clad in worn-out garments, and carrying mouldy provisions, &c., to ask Joshua to enter into a league with them. The envoys, on reaching the Hebrew camp, laid their errand before the great leader, declaring that they came from a very far land, and appealing in support of this statement to the state of their clothes, bread, &c., which they declared were new when they set out. They represented that they had heard of what had been done to Sihon and Og, and that, overwhelmed by dread, lest themselves should hereafter fall in the way of

the terrible invaders, they had come to make submission in the name of the rest of their nation, and to conclude a league. They were believed, and, without consulting Jehovah, Joshua and the chiefs of the people made a covenant with them "to let them live."

Speedily, of course, the deceit was discovered, and, though the *lives* of the Gibeonites were spared, they were made "hewers of wood, and drawers of water," or *Neth-inim*, while their *towns* were appropriated, Benjamim taking all but Kirjath-jearim, which fell to Judah's lot.

"*Of the remnant of the Amorites.*"—Gibeon, (with the rest of those in the league with it), was a *Hivite* town; but its people are here said to have been "of the remnant of the Amorites" because both Amorites and Hivites sprang from a common stock.

v. 6. "*Sons,*"—i.e., descendants.

"*Hang them up unto the Lord.*"—We cannot imagine Jehovah delighting, as a Moloch might be represented as doing, in this barbarous deed; but it must be remembered that not only was this the language of heathens, but that it had been represented to the speakers that the famine was "for Saul, and his bloody house," and that, consequently, they would deem such a slaughter to be well-pleasing to Him.

v. 7. "*But the king spared Mephibosheth . . . Jonathan, the Son of Saul.*"—This "*oath*" between David and Jonathan has previously been quoted. The writer of this part of the Sacred Narrative, doubtless, pens the words of the text in all good faith; but it is very questionable whether it was his oath to Jonathan that induced David to spare the son of his old friend, for *he had made the same promise to Saul himself*, at Engedi, after sparing the monarch's life. Saul had said, "And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord, *that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.*"

"*And David sware unto Saul.*"

This oath was, surely, as binding as that to Jonathan; yet David breaks it, by delivering up seven of Saul's house to the Gibeonites. His reason for sparing Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, lay, rather, in that prince's impotence,

than in the pledge given to his father, for David's conduct in *re* Ziba and Mephibosheth displays a strange indifference, at least, to the interests of the lame prince.

v. 8. "*Michal*,"—an error in transcription: it should be, "*Merab*."

"*Brought up for*,"—should be "*bare to*."

Merab, Saul's eldest daughter, was betrothed to David, but Saul dishonourably broke his pledge, and gave her to Adriel, to whom she bare these "five sons."

Our translators, finding "*Michal*" in the original, but knowing that *she* did not marry Adriel, mis-translated what should be "*bare to*," "*brought up for*," and, accordingly, many authorities suppose that Merab died young, and that Michal acted the part of mother to her sister's children; but this interpretation is certainly incorrect, for "*bare*" is certainly right, and "*brought up*," as surely wrong.

"*The Meholahite*,"—i.e., a native of Abel-Meholah, or Abel-mea, a city S. of Beth-shan; Elisha was born there.

v. 9. "*Hanged them*,"—having, there is little doubt, first slain them. According to the Law, the bodies should not have remained crucified longer than the sun-set of the day when they were gibbeted. It would seem probable that, as famine usually resulted from drought, some vow was made that the bodies should remain suspended, until rain fell, for this we find actually occurred.

"*In the beginning of barley-harvest*,"—the middle of Nisan, (April), when barley was ripe about Jericho; the barley-harvest did not become *general* till the early part of May.

v. 10. "*Took sackcloth . . . rock*,"—i.e., she made for herself a robe of coarse sackcloth, wherein to wrap herself at night, or when the weather was inclement, and constituted the rock her seat and couch. Of course, she must have had her hours of repose, during which she probably had a fire alight, to keep off the beasts of prey.

"*Until water . . . out of heaven*,"—i.e., till the commencement of the "early," or periodical, rains, which begin towards the end of October.

v. 12. "*David went . . . Gilboa*."—Saul, and his sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, fell on Gilboa, —the Philistines cut off Saul's head, (and, probably, those of his sons), and fastened it in the temple of Dagon,—

stripped off his armour, (and, probably, that of his sons), and fastened the bodies to the wall of Beth-shan, (above the gate). The men of Jabesh-Gilead, who, from the opposite side of the ravine, could see the bodies, crossed over during the night, took down the headless trunks, carried them away, and, having burned the corpses, (probably to prevent further insult), buried the ashes in their own city;—thus shewing their gratitude to Saul for his delivering them from Nahash. For this act David had warmly thanked them at the beginning of his reign.

v. 14. "*And the bones . . . Kish, his father.*"—This passage would lead us to suppose that the remains of Saul and Jonathan alone were buried in the family sepulchre; but there is no doubt that the "bones" of Rizpah's, and of Merab's, sons, also were there interred.

David's motive in this step seems to have been a notion that the land would not be cleansed as long as the crucified bodies remained unburied, while his removal of the ashes of Saul and his sons, and their interment in a private tomb, was, doubtless, intended "to obliterate every monument that" they "had ever been leaders of the host of Israel."

"*God was entreated for the land.*"—If, as we suppose, the slaughter of the seven "sons" of Saul was the result of a vile conspiracy on the part of the priests, it was easy for them to attribute the cessation of the famine to supposed appeasement of the Divine wrath.

It is competent, of course, to take quite the opposite view of David's conduct, and to understand the text literally as it stands. Then we must believe that the famine *was* on account of Saul and his house, and that David acted throughout with the most perfect *bona fides*, as a Divine instrument. In this view, (which finds a host of supporters, and which it is at the option of the student to adopt), David's interment of the remains of Saul and the other slaughtered members of his house, may be taken to have sprung from a laudable desire to gather in honourable sepulture, in the family tomb, the scattered relics of the unfortunate dynasty.

David seems to have written Psalm lxxv. to celebrate the end of the famine.

CHAPTER XXI. 15-end.

David's last Philistine War.—In the first battle, Abishai slays Ishbi-benob, who is on the eve of smiting David,—in the second encounter, Sibbechai slays Saph,—in the third engagement, Elhanan slays a giant, brother to Goliath,—in the fourth contest, Jonathan, David's nephew, slays a giant having on each hand six fingers, and on each foot six toes.

v. 15. "*The Philistines had . . . Israel.*"—This war was, doubtless, of the Philistines' own seeking, the late internal dissensions and civil wars, amongst the Hebrews, encouraging these inveterate foes to hope for success in an attempt to break the yoke imposed upon them by David.

"*Waxed faint,*"—having, it would seem, engaged with Ishbi-benob, in single combat,—forgetting in his ardour that he was no longer the active "stripling" who had slain Goliath.

v. 16. "*Was of the sons of the giant,*"—not a son of any particular giant, as some represent, (making him, and the other three mentioned, sons of Goliath), but one of the giant-race, amongst the Philistines. These giants were descended from the Anakim, whom Joshua expelled from Hebron, Debir, and other towns in the "Mountains of Judah," and whose remnant took refuge in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

"300 *shekels of brass*" = 150 ozs. Troy. The head of Goliath's spear was of iron, and weighed 600 shekels.

"*Gob.*"—I. Chron. says, "*Gezer.*" Gezer was a royal city of the Canaanites, in W. of Ephraim; it was assigned to the Levites, but never reduced; Solomon rebuilt it, after its having been, on some unrecorded occasion, burned by the Egyptians.

The position of *Gob* is not known: it must have been near Gezer.

v. 18. "*Saph,*"—"Sippai," in I. Chron.

v. 19. "*Jaare-oregim,*"—"Jair," in I. Chron.

"*The brother of Goliath the Gittite.*"—"The brother of" not being in the original, some authorities omit it, and

make this giant "*Goliath the Gittite*," regarding *Goliath* as a family name, and this giant as a descendant of the *Goliath* slain by David. But as "*the brother of*" is in the original, in the parallel passage in I. Chron., the reading of the text, in the present instance, is undoubtedly correct.

"*The shaff . . . beam*,"—is stated also about David's *Goliath*.

v. 22. "*Were born to the giant*,"—i.e., came of the race of the giant.

Psalm xxvii. seems to have been written by David, just after his narrow escape from being slain by the giant.

CHAPTER XXII.

David's Song of Thanksgiving for his deliverance from Saul; for his triumphs over all his other foes; and for all the blessings he has received from the hand of the Lord.

N.B.—The student, (especially if a senior), is earnestly advised to learn verbatim this Song of David, and the different readings from the corresponding Psalm.

This Song is almost the same as Psalm xviii.

The Rabbins reckon 74 differences in the two, the most important of them being carefully marked in the following notes.

The differences are supposed to result from David's having written the present, which is the original copy, in his younger days, and having revised and altered it, in later years, to the form it assumes in the Book of Psalms.

Some, however, think that both the versions we possess were taken from an older common source, (which, perhaps, David did not compose).

The *title* is the same, in purport, in both,—professing to be a song of praise for deliverance from Saul, and all other of David's enemies.

v. 2. "And he said, '*The Lord is my rock*,'" &c.—Ps. xviii. commences with a verse not found in the early copy,—"*And he said, 'I will love Thee, O Lord! my strength!'*"

v. 3. "*The God of my rock*,"—in the Ps.—"*my God, my strength*." Rock symbolized strength.

"*My refuge . . . violence*,"—in Ps.—nothing corresponding.

v. 5. "*The waves of death*,"—in Ps.—"*The sorrows of death*."

v. 6. "*Prevented*,"—used here in its strictly classical sense, (as it so often occurs in the Prayer Book,—e.g., "*Prevent, and follow, us*"), and = "*came before*,"—i.e. *stood in the way*, (to terrify).

v. 8. "*Of heaven*,"—in Ps.—"*of the hills*."

v. 9. "*There went up a smoke out of his nostrils*,"—expressing the wrath and indignation of Jehovah, by representing Him as shewing the same indications that men exhibit when, moved by furious rage, the heated breath rushes vehemently through the nostrils, which, for this reason, the ancients regarded as the seat of anger.

v. 11. "*And he was seen upon*,"—in Ps.—"*yea, He did fly upon*."

"*The wings of the wind*,"—a magnificent metaphor, frequently occurring in the ancient poets.

v. 12. "*And he made of the skies*,"—in Ps.—"*He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies*."

v. 13. "*Through the brightness . . . kindled*,"—in Ps.—"*At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail-stones and coals of fire*."

v. 14. "*Uttered his voice*,"—to which the Ps. adds, "*Hail-stones and coals of fire*."

"*Sent out*,"—in Ps.—"*Shot out*."

v. 16. "*Of the sea*,"—in Ps.—"*Of waters*."

"*At the rebuking of the Lord*,"—in Ps.—"*At thy rebuke, O Lord!*"

"*His nostrils*,"—in Ps.—"*thy nostrils*."

v. 23. "*As for . . . them*,"—in Ps.—"*I did not put away his statutes from me*."

v. 25. "*My cleanness*,"—in Ps.—"*The cleanness of my hands*."

v. 27. "*Unsavoury*,"—in Ps.—"*Froward*." "*Unsavoury*" here = *disagreeable*.

v. 28. "*But thine eyes . . . down*,"—in Ps.—"*But wilt bring down high looks*."

v. 29. "*For thou art my lamp, O Lord!*"—in Ps.—"*For thou wilt light my candle.*"

v. 30. "*Have I leaped over a wall,*"—alludes to some successful siege, wherein he had taken a town by scaling the ramparts.

v. 33. "*God is my strength and power,*"—in Ps.—"*It is God that guideth me with strength.*"

v. 34. "*Like hind's feet: . . . places.*"—The allusion is double, referring both to *the swiftness* of the hind, and *the ease and security* with which it stands and leaps upon the most dangerous rocks. Habakkuk has the same figure, "*The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hind's feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.*"

The meaning of David here is that the Lord will keep him in firm security in the most difficult and dangerous circumstances.

v. 35. "*A bow of steel,*"—rather of "*brass.*"

"*By mine arms.*"—To bend a bow of brass required prodigious strength; what power must be displayed, then, in bending it to breaking, and that *with the arms alone*, since the arms and foot were required in stringing the weapon.

David means here that the Lord has bestowed upon him *superhuman force* in his trials and struggles.

v. 36. "*The shield of thy salvation.*"—The Ps. adds, "*and thy right hand hath holden me up.*"

"*Destroyed,*"—in Ps.—"*overtaken.*"

v. 39. "*Consumed,*"—in Ps.—nothing corresponding.

v. 40. "*Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies,*"—i.e., "*Thou hast made my enemies my captives.*"—It was anciently the custom for a conqueror to place his foot on the necks of his war-captives, they bending, or lying down for the purpose: sometimes the victor rode over the necks of lines of prostrate prisoners.

v. 42. "*Looked,*"—in Ps.—"*cried.*"

v. 43. "*Of the earth . . . them abroad,*"—in Ps.—"*before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.*"

v. 44. "*My people,*"—in Ps., "*the people.*"

"*Kept me to be,*"—in Ps.—"*made me.*"

v. 47. "*The God of the rock of my salvation,*"—in Ps., merely "*the God of my salvation.*"

v. 51. "*He is the tower . . . for his King,*"—in Ps., "*Great deliverance giveth he to his King.*"

This sublime Song contains the most magnificent imagery ever penned; especially grand is that portion of it representing Jehovah as "bowing the heavens to come down" to the succour of David against his foes.

CHAPTER XXIII. 1-7.

The "Last Words" of David, wherein he declares what should be the character of a ruler over men; laments that his house is not so with God; expresses his belief that He will keep His covenant with him; and foretells the punishment of the wicked.

v. 1. "*The last words*,"—i.e., the last of his *poetical compositions*, or, the expression may merely indicate that these words were spoken later than the preceding song. The Introduction, from "*Now*," to "*the sweet psalmist of Israel said*," are interpolated by the compiler of the canon, (probably Ezra), and are necessary, since the Hebrew text is not divided into chapters, to distinguish these "last words" from the preceding Song, of which, otherwise, they would seem to form part.

"*Sweet*" = *pleasant, agreeable*.

CHAPTER XXIV

David orders the people to be numbered,—repents, before the Census is concluded,—Gad is sent to offer him his choice of one of three punishments, the result being Three Days' pestilence, which is stayed at the threshing-floor of Araunah,—thither David goes up, and offers sacrifices,—the Divine wrath is then appeased, and the Plague finally ceases.

v. 1. "*He moved David against them*."—As nothing can happen without the allowance of Jehovah, He is frequently represented, in Scripture, as *doing*, or *causing to be done*, what is actually evil; this, of course, is only a method of

speech, for, "God cannot be tempted with evil, *neither tempteth he any man,*" (i.e., *to evil*).

Another instance of the same kind of thing is found in this same verse, "And again *the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.*" The Hebrew writers believed that all national calamities were the result of God's displeasure, and, consequently, frequently attribute the untoward events whence such disasters spring to the anger of the Lord. So it is in the text.—God is represented as angry with the Hebrews, (*without any assigned cause*), and as actually tempting David to a heinous fault, so as to afford Him a pretext for punishing His people, and so appeasing His wrath! Of course, such a view of Jehovah's dealings with the Israelites, or with any nation, or individual, is altogether unworthy, lowering, and false; and, consequently, such modes of expression as those in the text must be understood in the figurative sense which we have given them.

The parallel passage, in I. Chron. states, "*And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel,*"—a rather different declaration from that just explained, wherein *God* is said to have moved David to the deed.

Some take "*Satan*" literally, since he certainly is the author of many; (in the estimation of the Hebrews of *all*), temptations.

Others would, instead of "*Satan,*" read, "*an adversary,*"—i.e., not one who was his declared, or secret, enemy; but some adviser, who, (while his motive might have been the advancement of David's interests, and the increase of his glory, only), counselled him to a step that issued so disastrously, that the counsellor might well be styled "*an adversary.*"

"*Go! number Israel and Judah.*"—Wherein the fault of which David was guilty, in taking this census, lay, has been variously represented:—

- 1, (and most popular). The mere act of taking a census was sinful, since its motives were pride, and its end self-glorification.

This, however, is absurd, for we find Moses taking two different censuses, at the command of God Himself.

2. (As Josephus alleges), David neglected to collect the $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel poll-tax, the payment of which, according to many authorities, was ordered by Moses to accompany every census.

This is as weak a reason as 1, for it is by no means certain that this tax *was* to accompany every numbering; while, were this the case, we may be very sure that the King, who was so eagerly amassing means for building the Temple, would not neglect to avail himself of this rich source of supply, (though no mention is made of the tax, in the text).

3. David, ill-advised by his "adversary," contemplated an extension of empire, and the forcing into military service, with this view, all the men of Israel and Judah capable of bearing arms. Knowing that he should never obtain the Divine sanction to this project, he proceeded, accordingly, instead of consulting Jehovah, to thus number the people, and so be in a position to calculate whether he had forces enough for his design.

He thus committed a double offence:—

- (1.) In planning the aggrandizement of his dominions, the bounds of which God had fixed, forbidding aggressive wars of conquest.
- (2.) In taking a step, which he knew was repugnant to Jehovah, without consulting Him.

This is, doubtless, the correct explanation.

v. 2. "*For*,"—should be, "*And*."

v. 3. "*Now the Lord thy God add unto the people.*"

. . . "*And that the eyes of my lord the king may see it.*"
—This is the expression of a wish, and = "*Now may the Lord thy God add unto the people.*" . . . "*And may the eyes of my Lord the king see it!*"

Here, again, we have Joab doing David an invaluable service, in tendering this wise advice.

v. 5. "*Aroer, on the right side of the city that lieth in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer.*"—There seems some confusion here between the two Aroers,—one in Reuben, and the other in Gad.

The Aroer of Reuben is always mentioned in connection with "*the city that lieth in the midst of the river,*" (i.e. the Arnon); whence it is supposed to have consisted of two parts, or distinct cities,—one on the bank of the river, and the other in the valley below, surrounded by the waters of the river.

This being the case, we should imagine the Aroer of the text to be the city of that name in Reuben. But it is spoken of as being "*in the midst of the river of Gad,*

and toward Jazer," which expression can apply only to the Aroer of Gad.

Now, the census-takers are sure to have been as methodical as possible in passing through the country, and, from what follows, it is clear that they commenced their enumeration E. of the Jordan, passed on northwards, and then returned S. It is not at all probable, then, that the commissioners would cross the Jordan, into Gad; but it is just what we might expect that they should pass over to Reuben, and make their first halting-place at the Aroer of that tribe, since it was in the extreme S. of the Jewish territory E. of Jordan.

We are compelled, then, to suppose, as before hinted, that the words identifying the Aroer of the text with that of Gad are an error, (on whose part we cannot, however, say).

v. 6. "*Dan-jaan*,"—near the Jordan source. In the division of Palestine amongst the tribes, the greater part of Dan was taken out of Judah. Failing to expel the Amorites from their lot, and, being "driven into the mountains" by that people, the Danites found their borders "too little" for their growing numbers. Accordingly, acting upon the advice of five spies, whom they sent forth to find out a favourable spot to which to emigrate, 600 of the tribe went up armed to the N. of the country, and there took the Sidonian town, and state, of Laish, or Lashem. This district, and city, were afterwards generally termed, Dan-Laish, to distinguish between the northern, and the southern, Danites.

v. 7. "*All the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites.*"—The seats of the Hivites were Gibeon, and its confederate towns,—and the N., N.W., and N.E. of Palestine,—their cities, in the present passage, being those in the N.W., for they are mentioned in connection with Tyre and Sidon.

The *Canaanites* proper occupied, before the Conquest, the sea-coast from Carmel to Philistia; their unreduced "*cities*," of the text, lay, of course, along this district. Thus we find the census-takers completing their round, by turning S., and making their way back to Jerusalem.

v. 9. "*800,000 valiant men that drew the sword, (i.e., were fit for military service). . . . 500,000 men.*"

In I. Chron. these numbers are stated at 1,100,000 in Israel, and 470,000 in Judah.

This is a serious discrepancy, not easily got over by the usual plea of incorrect transcription. The best solution

seems to be that some class of persons not included in the number given in the text is reckoned in the passage in Chron., the latter, therefore, being the more correct.

I. Chron. states that Levi and Benjamin were not counted, for which a reason may be found in the case of the former, since their duties lay not on the battle-field, but in conducting worship. Why Benjamin should have been passed over is not at all clear; it *may* be accounted for by supposing that ere the enumerators could commence their work in *this* tribe, David stopped the census.

It is interesting to compare the difference of numbers in this census, and in the two taken by Moses, (omitting Levi and Benjamin in each case),—

<i>Moses' First Census</i> , at Sinai,	<i>Israel.</i>	<i>Judah.</i>
B.C. 1491	493,550. .	74,600.
<i>Moses' Second Census</i> , in the		
Plain of Moab, B.C. 1451 .	479,630. .	76,500.
<i>David's Census</i>	1,100,000, .	470,000,
	(or 800,000). .	(or 500,000).

It will be seen, from this Table, how rapid had been the increase in the number of the Hebrews, since their settlement in Palestine. Taking the number of males capable of military service at one-fourth of the entire nation, we shall find the Hebrew population of Palestine, in David's reign, to have been about 6,000,000.

v. 11. "*For*,"—should be, "*And*."

v. 13. "*Wilt thou flee . . . they pursue thee*"?—This does not mean that, in case of accepting this alternative, David would be in one uninterrupted flight, and pursued by his foes, for three months,—but that he should be defeated, and forced to flee, in every battle.

In I. Chron. this is better brought out, "Three months to be *destroyed before thy foes*, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee."

v. 14. "*Let me not fall into the hand of man*."—David seems not to have cared which of the visitations coming from Jehovah's hands, (famine, or pestilence), he accepted, and so, while deciding that he will not be a constant fugitive for three months, before his enemies, he leaves it to the Lord to send which plague He pleases.

Though there was, clearly, a large amount of faith in God displayed in David's resigning himself to His hands rather than those of men, there can be little doubt that

the ignominy that would attend him, (always, hitherto, so fortunate in war), in case he chose the three month's flight, powerfully restrained him from that alternative.

v. 16. "*When the angel . . . to destroy it.*"—I. Chron. has, "And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and, *as he was destroying*, the Lord beheld, and he repented him of the evil." It is clear, then, that the plague had begun its work at Jerusalem. The command to spare the city from further havoc seems to have accompanied, or to have closely followed, David's repentance, and prayers.

"*The threshing-place.*"—The Hebrew threshing-floor was a level, elevated, circular, plot of ground, about 50 yds. in circumference, and having an earthen floor beaten hard and smooth. The sheaves were spread on the ground, and oxen, cows, and young cattle were driven over them, five abreast, or allowed to walk over the floor in what direction each animal might choose for itself.

The corn was then thrown up by means of pitch-forks, to effect a rough separation of straw and grain, by means of the wind, (to command a good current of which was the object of having the floor elevated). This separation having been effected, the grain was sifted, in order to get rid of lumps of earth, and other impurities,—and, finally, the floor was *thoroughly purged* by casting the wheat up in large wooden shovels, (the "*fan*" spoken of by John the Baptist), by which operation even the smallest particles of chaff were blown away, the grain falling, pure, on the "floor."

Small quantities of wheat were threshed with the *flail*, (as we find Gideon doing secretly), and there were rude threshing-machines employed amongst the Hebrews; but, in David's time, threshing by oxen, &c., was the method generally practised, and, therefore, no other need be noted.

"*Araunah*,"—"Ornan," in I. Chron.

"*The Jebusite*,"—probably a proselyte of that Canaanitish tribe.

v. 17. "*When he saw the Angel.*"—I. Chron. records,—*"And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces."*

I. Chron. says that Ornan and his four sons were threshing wheat,—that he looked round, saw the Angel,

and, with his sons, hid himself, (until he saw the King coming).

v. 19. "*And David went up,*"—i.e., up Mount Moriah, on which Araunah's threshing-floor is supposed to have occupied the same position as the Altar of Burnt Offering did in Solomon's Temple.

v. 20. "*Bowed himself . . . upon the ground.*"—This was the most profoundly deferential attitude with the Hebrews,—consisting in going down "on all fours," and bringing the face to almost touch the ground.

v. 22. "*Here be oxen . . . for wood.*"—I. Chron. adds "*and the wheat for the meat-offering.*"

v. 23. "*As a king,*"—so we say, "*a princely gift.*"

It may be that Ornan's munificent generosity was but Eastern *finesse*;—the Orientals making it part of a business transaction to pretend to be ready to give freely what the purchaser desires, and thus generally obtaining a better bargain.

v. 24. "*David bought . . . silver.*"—I. Chron. has, "So David gave to Ornan, for the place, *six hundred shekels of gold* by weight." It would appear most probable, that the fifty shekels of silver were given for the oxen, and implements, and use of the "floor," and that, afterwards, when the spot was chosen for the site of the Temple, the 6000 shekels of gold were paid by David to purchase the whole of Araunah's land on Moriah.

v. 25. "*David offered . . . peace-offerings,*"—being, as I. Chron. tell us, answered by fire upon the Altar.

No doubt the *priests* actually *offered* the sacrifices, as that function was absolutely theirs, and no one, but a prophet, (like Samuel), could alter the Law in this respect, and take the priests' duty.

I. Chron. tells us that David would have gone to Gibeon, (where were the original Tabernacle, and the Altar of Burnt Offering); but that he feared the Angel, who stood in the way, with his drawn sword.

"*The Lord . . . Israel.*"—I. Chron. adds, "*And the Lord commanded the Angel; and he put up his sword into the sheath thereof.*"

(We read in Genesis that after the Fall, an Angel, holding a flaming sword, stood at the entrance of Paradise, to prevent Adam and Eve from returning thither).

EPITOME OF DAVID'S LIFE, &c.

David = *beloved*.

Eighth, and youngest, son of Jesse of Beth-lehem.

(Only seven sons are given in the pedigree of Jesse, as found in Chron., but I. Sam. says that *seven* of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel, when he went to anoint David, and that David was then sent for, from keeping the sheep; and, in another place, the same Book distinctly states, that Jesse "*had eight sons*," . . . "*And David was the youngest*.")

Born, 1085 B.C.

The Psalmist's Life may be divided into five portions:—

1. SHEPHERD LIFE, (1085-1063).

During most of this period he remained at home, tending his father's flocks.

B.C.

1067. Anointed, at Beth-lehem, by David.

1063. Sent for, by Saul, to relieve his melancholy, by playing on the harp,—restores him,—and returns home to his former duties.

(He himself tells us he slew a lion, and a bear, that attacked his flocks, while he was a shepherd: this, probably, happened after his visit to Saul).

1063. Goes up to the Hebrew camp, with provisions for his brethren,—slays Goliath,—is formally presented to Saul, who lets him "go no more home,"—Jonathan conceives a deep affection for him.

2. COURTIER LIFE, (1063-1062).

1063. Saul sets him over his "men of war;" but has his jealousy roused, by the song of the women, "Saul hath slain his thousands," &c.,—casts a javelin at David, while playing before him: and removes him from his immediate presence, giving him a lower military rank, as "Captain of a thousand."

1063. Saul promises Merab to David,—gives her to another.

Michal loves David,—Saul promises her to him, on craftily-devised terms,—David fulfils them, and receives Michal's hand.

Saul commands his officers, and Jonathan, to slay David,—Jonathan remonstrates with his father,—who repents, vows that no harm shall happen to David, and restores him to his presence.

David defeats the Philistines,—Saul's jealousy rekindled,—he again casts a javelin at David,—the latter escapes to his house,—Saul sends thither, to take him,—Michal lets her husband down through a window, and deceives her father's messengers by a stratagem.—David escapes to Samuel, at Naioth,—and resides with him there. Saul sends three successive companies thither to take David,—they all begin to prophecy,—Saul himself goes,—is overcome by the Divine *afflatus*, and prophesies.

1062. David leaves Naioth, and returns secretly to Gibeah,—has an interview with Jonathan;—they arrange for David to test Saul's feelings towards him, by absenting himself from the king's table at the New Moon,—decide upon a sign by which David, in his hiding-place, shall know how matters have gone,—and make a solemn covenant with each other.

Saul notices David's absence.—Jonathan gives him a fictitious explanation,—the king's wrath is kindled,—in his rage, he shews his real feelings towards David,—orders Jonathan to fetch him that he may be slain, and so prevented ascending the throne,—and, on his son's remonstrance, hurls a javelin at even *him*.

Jonathan gives David an unpropitious signal,—the latter quits his hiding-place,—takes leave of Jonathan,—and enters upon his wanderings as an outlaw.

3. OUTLAW LIFE, (1062-1056).

1062. David comes to Nob, with a few followers,—Ahimelech, the high-priest, not knowing of the rupture

with Saul, feeds the band with shew-bread, and gives David the sword of Goliath.—David passes on to Achish, who being suspicious, and menacingly unfriendly, he feigns madness,—and so escapes probable death.

Takes refuge in the Cave of Adullam, where he is joined by “his brethren, and all his father’s house,” and a horde of outlaws, consisting of those in poverty, and in debt, and malcontents, (to the number, in all, of 400).

He passes over into Moab,—advised by God, he returns to Judah, leaving his parents in the care of the king of Moab,—comes to the Forest of Haresh. Doeg tells Saul of Ahimelech’s succouring David,—Saul sends for him, and the rest of the priests, from Nob,—Ahimelech explains his conduct, by shewing that he was unconscious of the breach between the king and David,—Saul orders Doeg, and the “footmen,” to slay the priests,—Ahimelech, and all the other priests at Nob, are slaughtered, to the number of eighty-five, Abiathar alone escaping,—Nob, with its inhabitants, (and oxen, asses, sheep,) destroyed,—Abiathar, with the Ephod, flees to David, with whom he remains.

1061. David defeats the Philistines, and compels them to raise the siege of Keilah,—consulting God, he learns that the people of Keilah intend to betray him to Saul,—he therefore escapes thence to the wilderness of Ziph, where he and Jonathan have a secret interview, and renew their friendship, and covenant.

The Ziphites betray, to Saul, David’s whereabouts,—and lead him to the outlaw’s lair, to find him fled to the wilderness of Maon,—Saul follows,—when he is one side of the mountain, and David on the other, (both ignorant that they are so near together,) a message is brought to Saul of a Philistine invasion,—he ceases the pursuit of David and returns to battle with his old enemies.

David takes refuge in the fastnesses of En-gedi.—Saul, having defeated the Philistines, renews his persecution,—and traces David to En-gedi.—David finds the King asleep in a cave,—saves his

life ; but cuts off his skirt,—announces from a distance what he has done,—Saul confesses his wickedness,—asks David's forgiveness,—exact from him a promise to spare his house, after his death,—and returns home.

1060. David demands supplies from Nabal,—being refused, he sets out to revenge himself,—Abigail meets, and appeases, him,—Nabal dies,—David marries Abigail.

The Ziphites again betray David's whereabouts.—Saul, with 3,000 men, goes to seek him, and pitches on the hill of Hachilah, while David remains in the wilderness of Ziph,—he enters Saul's camp,—takes his spear and cruse ; but spares his life,—proclaims, from a hill opposite, what he has done,—Saul again repents,—and returns home.

1058. David again flees to Achish,—is now *well* received,—Achish gives him Ziklag to dwell in.

(David remains sixteen months at Ziklag,—spoils the S. Geshurites, the Amalekites, and other foreign tribes, while pretending to Achish that it is against the S. tribes of *Israel* his marauding expeditions are directed, and so making the Philistine “lord” believe that he is abhorred of the Hebrews, and, therefore, bound to *him* for ever).

1056. The Philistines make war with Israel, and assemble their forces at Aphek,—David, with his followers, accompanies Achish, as if to aid against his own countrymen,—the other Philistine “lords,” suspecting he will prove a traitor to them in battle, demur to David's presence,—Achish, accordingly, sends him back.

David, on reaching home, finds that the Amalekites have burned, and spoiled, Ziklag, and carried off all the females, during his absence,—Divinely directed, he pursues, and overtakes, the Amalekites,—slays all but 400, who escape,—recovers all the captives and goods, taking large spoil in addition,—sends presents to the elders of numerous cities.

(*All the particulars up to this point are from I. Sam.*)

1056. Tidings of the battle of Mount Gilboa are brought to David, at Ziklag, by an Amalekite, who professes to have given Saul his *coup de grace*,—David causes the messenger to be slain,—he laments for Saul and Jonathan.
1055. Divinely directed, David goes up to Hebron, with his wives and followers,—and is there *anointed King over the house of Judah*.

(David's settled life, at Ziklag, as "a legitimate chief with fixed possessions," was a transition-state between his outlaw, and his king, life.)

4. KING-LIFE AT HEBRON, (1055-1048.)

(David thanks the men of Jabesh-Gilead, for burying Saul and his sons.)

(War with the house of Saul.)

(Battle of Gibeon : Abner defeated : Asahel killed).

(David marries four additional wives, and has six sons born to him.)

(War with Ish-bosheth continues, to the advantage of David, whose cause gains ground.)

1053. Abner quarrels with Ish-bosheth,—offers to bring Israel over to David,—the latter demands, and obtains, (as the condition of entertaining the proposal), the restoration of Michal.

Abner consults with the "elders of Israel,"—goes to Hebron, and arranges with David the transfer to him of the allegiance of the eleven tribes,—returns to effect his purpose.—Joab, learning what has happened, denounces David's conduct,—sends, (as if from the King), to call Abner back.—Abner returns,—and is slain by Joab, in the gate of Hebron.—David makes lamentation over the murdered man.

Ish-bosheth slain,—his assassins slain by David.
All the tribes assemble at Hebron, and offer David the crown of the Entire Kingdom,—he is anointed, and takes a Coronation Oath, as King over all Israel.

1048. Jerusalem taken, and made David's capital,—he extends the city,—and builds a house for himself on Mount Zion, Hiram sending workmen, and cedarwood.

(David takes fresh wives, and has eleven children born to him, at Jerusalem).

1043. David defeats the Philistines, twice, in the Valley of Rephaim.

1042. Assembling the chief men of all Israel, David removes the Ark from Kirjath-jearim,—Uzzah smitten,—the Ark taken aside, and left in the house of Obed-edom.

Hearing that its presence has proved a blessing to Obed-edom, David is encouraged to accomplish his design,—the Ark safely brought to Jerusalem, and placed in the tent prepared for it,—Michal taunts her husband, &c.

David announces to Nathan his intention of building a Temple,—the prophet first encourages him,—afterwards, Divinely directed, forbids his design, and announces that it shall be Solomon's work ; but promises that David's kingdom shall be established,—David utters a Thanksgiving Prayer.

1040. David conquers, and subjects, the Philistines, (taking "Gath and her towns"), and Moab,—conquers Zobah, and Damascus, (reducing Damascus to vassalage),—Toi, of Hamath, sends his son with congratulations and presents to David,—Mephibosheth adopted, and Ziba made his steward.

1037. An embassy sent to Hanun, king of Ammon, who shamefully treats them,—David, accordingly, commences war with the Ammonites.—These unite with Rehob, and Zobah,—the allies are defeated.

1036. Hadadezer forms, against David, a Syrian league, which is overcome,—the Syrian states dependent on Hadadezer ask for terms, and accept vassalage.

(Edomites defeated by David, Joab, and Abishai, in the Valley of Salt,—their country wasted, and garrisoned,—they are reduced to subjection).

1035. Rabbah of Ammon besieged by Joab, David remaining at Jerusalem.

He commits adultery, and murder,—takes Bathsheba for wife,—she bears him a son.

1034. Nathan convicts the King, by a parable, of the

enormity of his guilt, and denounces God's judgments upon him, in consequence,—David repents,—Bath-sheba's child is smitten with sickness, and dies.

1033. Rabbah captured, and Ammonites subjected,—Solomon born.
1032. Amnon outrages Tamar.
1030. Absalom slays Amnon, and flees to Geshur.
1027. Absalom's return to Jerusalem effected by Joab, through the Tekoite woman.
1025. Absalom recalled to his father's presence and favor. (Absalom smooths the way to revolt).
1023. Absalom obtains permission to go to Hebron,—and sets up his standard there.
David flees,—Absalom enters Jerusalem.
Ahithophel's advice, to follow David immediately, not taken,—he hangs himself.
David crosses the Jordan, to Mahanaim, and is hospitably received,—Absalom's troops, under Amasa, follow.
Defeat, and death, of Absalom,—David inconsolable at the loss of his son,—is rebuked by Joab.—David sends to Zadok, and Abiathar, urging them to procure his recall,—wins over Amasa, by a promise of his superseding Joab.
Judah, and part of Israel, unite to welcome back their king, who returns to Jerusalem.
1022. The men of Israel quarrel with those of Judah,—and revolt, under Sheba,—Amasa ordered to quell the rebellion; but fails to collect troops within the appointed time,—Abishai entrusted with the task,—Joab joins him,—and slays Amasa, at Gibeon,—Sheba besieged in Abel,—his head cut off, and thrown to Joab.
- 1022-1019. Three years' bad harvests, on account of Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites, who now demand seven of Saul's "sons" to crucify,—David consents,—Rizpah watches the bodies,—David at last buries them, (with the ashes of Saul, and his sons killed at Gilboa), in the sepulchre of Kish,—the dearth then ceases.
1018. David's Last Philistine War,—four battles, in each of which a giant is killed, one of them being

on the point of slaying David, in the first conflict.

(David utters a Song of Thanksgiving, when God had thus delivered him from all his enemies,—and speaks his “last words”).

1017. David determines to number the people,—when the Census is almost done, God, through Gad, expresses his anger, and offers David the choice of three evils,—the result of the king’s choice is a fearful Pestilence of Three Days, which, after smiting 70,000, is stayed, at Araunah’s threshing-floor.—David goes up thither,—buys the floor, oxen, and implements,—and offers sacrifices.—God accepts them, and the plague is finally stayed.

(This is the limit of David’s reign as related in II. Sam.)

THE FOLLOWING IS A VERY BRIEF SKETCH OF THE EVENTS OF DAVID’S LIFE, AFTER THE NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE, UNTIL HIS DEATH.

FROM I. KINGS:—

1015. David takes Abishag as a personal attendant.—Adonijah, supported by Joab and Abiathar, causes himself to be proclaimed King,—Nathan informs Bath-sheba, who tells David,—the king orders Nathan, Zadok, and Benaiah, to proclaim, and anoint, Solomon,—Adonijah takes asylum at the Altar,—his life is spared.

On the approach of death, David charges Solomon to

1. Walk in the commands of the Law.
2. Avenge him on Joab, and Shimei; but to shew kindness to Barzillai’s sons.

David dies.

FROM I. CHRONICLES:—

In prospect of death, David summons the National Assembly,—tells them how he had desired to build a Temple, and why he had not done so,—assures them that God has chosen Judah, his (David’s) house, and himself, as the tribe, family, and individual, in whom the kingly office should be vested,—that Jehovah had fixed upon Solomon to succeed him, had promised to establish *his* throne, and had appointed *him* to build the House.

He urges upon the "Elders," the keeping of God's commandments, as the only condition on which they can hope to continue in possession of the Land.

Turning next to Solomon, he earnestly begs him to

1. Serve God faithfully.
2. Build the Temple.

He tells him that he has, Divinely directed, prepared a plan of the future Temple, set aside abundant materials towards its erection, and drawn up an arrangement of its worship,—and hands to him a written schedule of all these matters.

Again addressing the Congregation, he reminds them that Solomon is very young, and the work arduous.—He urges, then, that it will be necessary to afford the young prince sympathetic aid, especially in the matter of seeing that he shall not be distressed for want of means.—He announces how largely he himself has contributed towards the undertaking,—and asks them what they will give.—They respond most generously.

David then blesses God, in that noble ode, "*Thine, O Lord! is the greatness,*" &c.,—and calls upon the Congregation also to bless Jehovah, which they do, bowing and worshipping.

The next day, the Congregation offer 1000 bullocks, 1000 rams, and 1000 lambs, for burnt-offerings, accompanied by drink-offerings,—and a grand Sacrificial Feast follows.

The narrative adds that Solomon was anointed King, and Zadok priest,—and ends, as far as David's life is concerned, in the declaration that he died at "*a good old age.*"

CHARACTER.—Of much personal strength, vigor, and activity; capable of undergoing great hardships.

As a warrior.—Brave, skilful, energetic, magnanimous.

As a ruler.—Wise, far-seeing, and essentially patriotic. Constitutional and just in the early part of his reign, the latter portion of it was, unfortunately, marked by despotism, growing chiefly out of the large standing army which he kept.

In religion.—Cherished firm faith in God, attributing all blessings and deliverances to Him alone,—zealous in support of the national worship,—and devoutly pious in his own feelings and general conduct,—above all, implicitly

obeying Jehovah, (in this respect forming a perfect contrast to Saul).

In private life.—As a rule, a fond and devoted parent,—a faithful friend,—temperate in habits,—warm-hearted, and impulsive, (traits leading him into much trouble),—generous,—and clement, (*e.g.* in his sparing Saul).

The great blots on his fame are—

1. *His proposed assassination of Nabal.*
2. *His ingratitude to Joab and Abishai*,—shewn in his readiness to dispossess Joab of the chief command, (which he had fairly won on David's own terms), in favor of the rebels, Abner, and Amasa.
3. *His Adultery, and the murder of Uriah.*
4. *His numbering the people*, without consulting God, and with a view to foreign conquests, (a thing utterly opposed to Jehovah's will).
5. *His injunctions to Solomon to find some excuse for slaying Shimei and Joab*, (both of whom he had personally forgiven).

It will be seen that these errors, and crimes, sprang, mainly, from his natural impulsiveness,—and the spirit of the age in which he lived, (when monarchs considered it no sin to appropriate *any* woman they fancied, and regarded human life as of no account, when standing in their way).

David's character seems to have sadly deteriorated in the latter part of his reign. As early as the period of his Adultery, a slothful supineness seems to have stolen over him, for, instead of leading his army himself, against Rabbah, he remained at Jerusalem.

The numerous harem he kept must have tended to this lowering of moral, and physical, tone.

After his double crime, he seems to have been haunted by a remorse that paralyzed him, body and mind: he ceased to attend in the gate to administer justice, and shewed himself foolishly weak in connection with Absalom's rebellion.

At the same time, the despotic power he had established, united to the preceding causes, rendered him capricious, so that he was frequently guilty of injustice, and cruelty.

This change in his character, and his tyranny, had so alienated his subjects' affections, that his own tribe joined

in Absalom's Rebellion, and such an insignificant personage as Sheba was able to rouse Israel against him.

After the crushing of these revolts, however, a great portion of the enthusiasm felt for him, at the commencement of his reign, returned, while, having learned a bitter lesson, he seems to have henceforth returned, in a considerable degree, to his old, and better, self.

In spite of all drawbacks, however, David's reign was really beneficial to the country:—

"He had succeeded to a kingdom distracted with civil dissension, environed on every side, or occupied by, powerful and victorious enemies, without a capital, almost without an army, without any bond of union between the tribes. He left a compact and united state, stretching from the frontier of Egypt, to the foot of Lebanon, from the Euphrates, to the sea. He had crushed the power of the Philistines; subdued, or curbed, all the adjacent kingdoms; he had formed a lasting, and important, alliance with the great city of Tyre. He had organized an immense disposable force," "at the head of which were officers of consummate experience, and, what was more highly esteemed, in the warfare of the time, of extraordinary personal activity, strength, and valour."

"He had also given especial attention to the management of public worship, as the most efficacious means of promoting religion and morality, and, consequently, obedience to the Invisible, Supreme, Monarch."

His reign is "the great critical era in the history of the Hebrews. It decided that they would have, for nearly five centuries, a national monarchy, a fixed line of priesthood, and a solemn religious worship, by music, and psalms of exquisite beauty; it finally separated Israel from the surrounding heathen, and gave room for producing those noble monuments of Sacred Writ, to the influence of which over the whole world no end can be seen."

The real work of establishing Israel, as lord over the whole soil of Canaan, was left for David, though initiated, and partially accomplished, by Joshua.

The declaration, on Jehovah's part, that David was "*a man after his own heart*," (which has been a favourite weapon of infidelity), does not mean what enemies represent it as doing: it is no *justification* of his crimes, for these *we find God severely denouncing, and punishing.*

The expression is intended to apply to the earnest zeal he almost always displayed to learn, and execute, God's will, in the acts of his administration,—to his efforts on behalf of religion,—and to his not following “strange gods,” (this devout obedience being the very *antipodes* of Saul's conduct).

At the same time, too, we must remember, (as has been before intimated), that his vices were the fault of the age, rather than the man,—that, in comparison with other Western monarchs, his faults were light,—that his ruling anxiety, and aim, were to do right,—and that, though he sinned, his repentance was always bitter. No one who has read the Psalms he wrote can doubt his deep, ardent, and habitual, piety.

David was a notable Type of Christ, in—

1. *His descent* from the same tribe, and family.
2. *His being anointed king over Israel*, (as Christ is the Messiah of *his* Israel, the Church).
4. *His sufferings, and trials*, at the hands of his enemies.
5. *His betrayal* by Absalom and Ahithophel, (foreshadowing Christ's, by Judas).
6. *His final triumph* over all his foes.
7. *His extensive kingdom*.

David's Writings.—It is a matter of keen debate, how many of the Psalms were written by David.

It is not within our scope to discuss the question. Those composed by him, in connection with the events in II. Sam., are noticed in their proper places. This is all that is needed for the student, besides the knowledge of the fact that, out of the 150 Psalms, *the Hebrew Text attributes to David* 73; and *the Septuagint* 84.

There were, doubtless, besides the Psalms of David which we possess, large numbers of poetical compositions penned by him, but not extant: of this we have evidence in the fact that II. Sam. contains three rhythmical pieces,—*David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan*; part of his *Lament over Abner*; and his “*Last Words*.”

David's writings are usually sweet, elegant, and musical, with a plaintive undertone pervading them, (as we might expect from the color of his life); but at times they rise to the most gigantic, and magnificent, sublimity, or rush on in a torrent of scathing invective, and denunciation.

They embody every possible phase of the Christian pilgrimage, from the summit of the "Delectable Mountains," down to the "Valley of the Shadow of Death."

EPITOME OF DAVID'S VICTORIES, AND CONQUESTS.

- B.C.
 ? Joab defeats Abner, at Gibeon,—Asahel slain.
 1043. Philistines twice defeated in Valley of Rephaim.
 1040. The Philistines defeated, and reduced to vassalage;
 —"Gath, and her towns," taken from them.
 Moab defeated, and made tributary.
 Hadadezer, of Zobah, defeated.
 Damascus defeated, made tributary, and garrisoned
 by the Hebrews.
 1037. The Syro-Ammonite League defeated.
 1036. The Syrian League, under Shobach, defeated, at
 Helam, Shobach being slain; the states dependent
 on Zobah submit, and are made tributary.
 ? Edomites defeated in the Valley of Salt,—their
 country overrun, subjected, and garrisoned with
 Hebrews.
 1035. Rabbah besieged.
 1033. Rabbah taken, (ending the Ammonite war),—Am-
 monites made vassals to David.
 1023. Absalom defeated, and slain, in Wood of Ephraim.
 1022. Sheba's Revolt crushed, by his death, at Abel.
 1018. Last of David's Philistine Wars,—four campaigns,
 in each of which a giant is slain, and the Hebrews
 are victorious.

DAVID'S INSTITUTIONS,—RELIGIOUS, CIVIL, MILITARY: AND HIS PERSONAL, AND HOUSEHOLD, ESTABLISHMENT.

1. RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.

The account of these is taken from I. Chronicles, unless the contrary is stated. There is reason to believe that the majority of them were not organized till a period rather further on than that at which II. Samuel ends; but questions

are frequently asked on these points, when the latter Book is prescribed as a subject of examination : they are therefore given here, (most carefully compiled from the original, in the light of the best authorities), and the student is earnestly advised to be on the safe side, by thoroughly mastering what follows. The only matters he can omit are the lists of the Courses of Priests and Levites.

David found the religious condition of the people at a low ebb, to which it had long been sinking, from the death of Joshua. Under the Judges, *every man did what seemed right in his own eyes*,—most of the Judges were impious, and some of them scandalously vicious,—and the very priesthood grew corrupt, (*e.g.* Eli's sons). Saul, instead of upholding the national religion, slaughtered, and otherwise ill-used, the priests, until wearing an ephod was regarded as almost a crime ; while his own impious example was most detrimental to his subjects' character.

The supremacy of the Philistines, too, was extremely destructive of the national worship.

Finally, the original Tabernacle, with the Altar of Burnt-Offering, was at Gibeon, while the Ark was at Kirjath-jearim, so that there was no rallying-point for sacrifice and worship. The priests and Levites, no longer called upon to perform their proper duties, or receiving their due support, ceased to regard themselves as a separate class, and engaged in civil and military affairs, like those of other tribes.

As soon as David's rule over the whole country was assured, he took steps to restore the worship of Jehovah. Determining to make Jerusalem the religious, as well as political, centre of the Tribes, he first of all fetched up the Ark from Kirjath-jearim, and placed it in the tent which he had prepared as its temporary abode, until he should have raised for it the temple he contemplated building. This act established the Priests in direct service before the Ark. Having been forbidden himself to construct God's House, he set to work, with a noble and generous self-abnegation, and pious zeal, to do all he could towards preparing ample material, for the task to be accomplished by Solomon,—and towards organizing, and ordering, the worship and service of the as yet unbuilt temple.

The "Religious Institutions" of David include

the *Priests*, the *Levites*, (with the *Nethinim*), and the *Preparations* made for building the *Temple*.

I. The Priests.

1. THE HIGH-PRIEST:—

During David's reign there were two high-priests, (*Abiathar*, son of *Ahimelech* ; and *Zadok*, son of *Ahitub*),—a phenomenon thus explained :—

Aaron's two elder sons, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, being slain by *Jehovah*, the High-priesthood fell to the family of *Eleazar*, Aaron's third son. It continued in that line, until *Eli*'s time, when, for no recorded cause, the office was taken from the family of *Eleazar*, and transferred to that of *Ithamar*, Aaron's youngest son,—*Eli* being the first high-priest of the new line.

When *Jehovah* denounced the misconduct of *Eli*'s sons, He declared that He would deprive the family of the High-priesthood, adding,—

“And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart, and in my mind : and I will build him a sure house ; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.”

The office, however, continued in the line of *Ithamar*, until the reign of *Saul*, when *Ahimelech*, of that family, being Chief Pontiff, was slain with all his house, save *Abiathar*, his son. *Saul then gave the office to Zadok*, son of *Ahitub*, of the family of *Eleazar*: thus God's message was almost fulfilled,—the office being partially restored to the right line, and *Zadok* continuing all his life to prove himself “a faithful priest.”

Meanwhile, *Abiathar* having fled, with the *Ephod*, to *David*, the latter received him, and, at his succession to the throne of *Judah*, made him High-Priest over that kingdom. Meanwhile, *Zadok* performed the duties of his office in *Israel*.

On becoming sole king, *David*, knowing that prophecy was fulfilled in *Zadok*, and that he was a good and true man, did not interfere,—but allowed him, and *Abiathar*, to occupy the post together. There is no record of how they shared the duties of the office : but we find both remaining faithful to *David*, until *Abiathar*'s joining *Adonijah*'s conspiracy, at the close of *David*'s reign.

He escaped punishment *then*; but, being concerned with Adonijah, in the scheme to procure Abishag for the latter, Solomon degraded him from his office, and banished him, for life, to his house at Anathoth. *Zadok then became sole Pontiff*,—and his descendants continued to occupy the High-priesthood, and advise the monarchs of Judah, until the Captivity. Thus was Jehovah's prediction completely fulfilled,—for "*a faithful priest*," (not of the line of Eli, and Ithamar), wore the tiara,—his "*house*" was a "*sure*" one,—and he and his family "*walked before*" the Kings of Judah, (God's "*anointed*"), "*for ever*," (i.e. as long as the kingdom of Judah endured).

(Both in II. Sam., and I. Chron., instead of "*Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech*," we read, "*Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar*." Also, in Mark, we find Christ representing "*Abiathar*" as "*the High-Priest*," who gave David the shew-bread; whereas he is called "*Ahimelech*," in the account of the occurrence given in I. Sam.)

Now, the New Test. words are fairly explainable, by understanding them as meaning "*Abiathar, who afterwards became High-Priest*,"—for the event *did* happen in *Abiathar's* days, though he was not High-Priest at the time.

But this does not explain the *Old Test.* readings. We can, however, bring them into accord with that in Mark, by simply supposing, (as was, and is, not rare, in the E.), that both the High-Priest, usually called "*Ahimelech*," and his son, usually called "*Abiathar*," had each two names, being called, indifferently, either Ahimelech, or Abiathar.

This seems the correct solution; if it be not so, we must conclude that the Old Test. scribes have made a most clumsy and careless error, in transcription.

2. THE ORDINARY PRIESTS:—

David assembled these, before his death, and divided them into

Twenty-four Courses,—each to officiate, in turn, one week at a time, the course being changed every Sabbath. As there were more families of Eleazar's house, than of Ithamar's, (owing to Saul's massacre, at Nob), the former contributed sixteen Courses, the latter only eight.

Twenty-four Heads of Families were appointed to preside over the Courses.

I. Chron. calls these "*governors of the sanctuary*, and

governors of the house of God." Ezra terms them "*princes,*" or, "*chiefs of the priests.*"

(They, with the then high-priest, and those who *had* served as such, constitute the "*chief priests*" of the New Test.)

Of these heads, one of the sixteen, and one of the eight, was reckoned chief over the other fifteen, and seven, respectively.

The heads of the Courses were chosen, and the order of service fixed, by lot, in the presence of David, Zadok, Abiathar, the Princes of the Tribes, and the "chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites,"—the result being recorded by Shemaiah, "the scribe, one of the Levites."

The following is the list of the Courses, each being called by the name of its head:—

1. The Course of Jehoiarib.	13. The Course of Huppah.
2. " " Jedaiah.	14. " " Jeshebeah.
3. " " Harim.	15. " " Bilgah.
4. " " Seorim.	16. " " Immer.
5. " " Malchijah.	17. " " Hezir.
6. " " Mijamin.	18. " " Aphses.
7. " " Hakkoz.	19. " " Pethahiah.
8. " " Abijah.	20. " " Jehezekel.
9. " " Jeshuah.	21. " " Jachin.
10. " " Shecaniah.	22. " " Gamul.
11. " " Eliashib.	23. " " Delaiah.
12. " " Jakim.	24. " " Maaziah.

The reasons for David's dividing the priests, (and Levites), seem to have been, that

1. The number of the tribe was so large, that they could not possibly all minister together.
2. The duties of the Temple would prove more various than those of the Tabernacle had been, and, therefore, it was necessary to appoint a distinct class for each office.
3. The work of the Temple would be far heavier than in the Tabernacle days, and would, consequently, be more exhausting. By dividing into Courses, —only one of which served at a time,—overwork, with its consequent fatigue, was avoided.

(Only four of the courses returned from the Captivity; but these were anew divided into twenty-four, which assumed the same names, as David's Courses.

Thus, the eighth course, of which Abijah was head, did not return from the captivity; yet we read that Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, was "*of the course of Abia.*"

After the return, the number of Priests increased so greatly, that it was found impossible for the whole of a course to minister at once: consequently, *each of the twenty-four was divided into six sub-courses*, or families,—*one of which ministered a day at a time*, on each of the first six days of the week of their attendance, while all united on the seventh day in offering the sacrifices.

Each member of every sub-course had his own special duty, fixed by lot: thus we find it was the turn of Zacharias to burn incense).

I. Chron. states, that some of the sons of the priests made "*the ointment of the spices*," (i.e. the Holy Anointing-Oil).

Towards the priestly order, David ever shewed the warmest affection. This arose from his piety,—from the succour formerly given him by Ahimelech, and the consequent terrible penalty which he inadvertently brought on the priests at Nob,—and from the fidelity of Abiathar, Zadok, and the tribe of Levi, generally, to his cause.

II. The Levites.

It had been customary for the Levites to commence their duties at thirty years of age: *David*, however, altered this regulation, and *made them eligible for their office from twenty years old*, and upwards.

He found that *there were 38,000 of the tribe, whose age fulfilled the required conditions.*

These he divided into four classes, the first having the same duties that had ever been the Levites' lot, and the other three being set aside for special services which the Temple would demand.

Three of the four classes were re-divided, by David, *into courses.*

The four classes of the Levites were—

1. THE GENERAL ASSISTANTS,—24,000 in number,—*divided into twenty-four Courses*, each with a head,—officiating in turns, probably a week at a time.

Their general duties were the same as those originally ascribed to the whole body of Levites, under Moses, viz.,

(as I. Chron. states), "*to wait on the sons of Aaron in the work of the House of God.*"

There is great difficulty in arriving at a conclusion as to who were the Heads of the Courses of these "*General Assistants*": consequently the names of the Courses, and their chiefs, are not here given, and must remain an open question.

2. THE OFFICERS AND JUDGES,—6000 in number,—*no division into Courses given: most likely, they were not divided*, since their functions probably necessitated their remaining stationary, and their duties were not sufficiently arduous to require periodical reliefs.

Three classes of them, however, are given, according to the part of the country over which they exercised their duties:—

1. "**Chenaniah and his sons** were for the outward business over Israel."
2. "**Hashabiah and his brethren**," (1,700 in number) were "*Officers*" W. of Jordan, "*in all business of the Lord, and in the service of the King.*"
3. "**Jerijah and his brethren**," (2,700 in number), were "*rulers*" E. of Jordan, *for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the King.*"

(The number of Chenaniah's sons is not stated, otherwise we might calculate the relative proportions of the Officers, and of the Judges, unless it were a number making up, with the 1700 and 2700, 6000,—for then both kinds of officials would fall under the one reckoning).

The Duty of the Officers was, probably, *the administration of the written*, (as opposed to the oral), *Law*.

The Judges seem to have been inferior magistrates, performing, in a lower degree, the same functions as the Officers.

Some, however, (and that with a considerable shew of reason), make the Judges superior to the Officers, and represent the latter as *merely scribes, clerks, or assessors, to the former*.

Returning now to the three classes, it is clear that Hashabiah, and his brethren, executed judicial functions on the W., and Jerijah on the E., of Jordan.

"What then, were the duties of Chenaniah and his sons"? Probably, they acted as *Justices of Appeal*, and held their

Court at Jerusalem, and in all the chief Cities of Palestine. —a settled number being stationed in each place; or else they all had their head-quarters at Jerusalem, and went on circuit, in certain divisions, at intervals, through the provinces.

3. THE PORTERS,—4000 in round numbers,—divided into twenty-four Courses, each serving a week at a time, in rotation,—their order, quarter of service, and duties, being fixed by lot.

There were four chief Porters, over the twenty-four Courses, viz.—

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Meshelemiah, a Korahite, | over the Porters on the E. |
| 2. Zechariah, his son | " " " N. |
| 3. Obed-edom, a Korahite, | " " " S. |
| 4. Hosah, a Merarite, | " " " W. |

These appear to have remained on service always, lodging in the Temple, so as to be close at hand to open, and shut, the gates.

The twenty-four heads of Courses were six brothers of Zechariah; eight sons, and six grandsons, of Obed-edom; and four sons of Hosah: their names are given in I. Chron.; but it is not necessary that they should be learned.

Twenty-four Porters were to officiate daily,—six on the E.; four on the N.; eight on the S.; six on the W.

The duties of the Porters appear to have been to open, and shut, the gates of the Temple; to keep the peace in its precincts; to prohibit the entrance of any unclean, or otherwise ineligible persons; and to act as night-patrols.

Certain of the General Assistants, and of the Porters, are mentioned as having special functions, thus:—

Mattithiah, a Korahite, "*had the set office over the things that were made in the pans,*" (i.e. the unleavened cakes.)

Other Korahites prepared the shew-bread weekly.

Ahijah, and Shebuel, had chief charge of "*the treasures of the House of God; and the treasures of 'the dedicated things.'*"

Under Ahijah and Shebuel were Zetham, and Joel his brother, "*over the treasures of the House of the Lord.*"

Shelomith, Rehabiah, Jeshaiah, Joram, and Zichri, Shebuel's brethren, "*over the treasures of the 'dedicated things.'*"

Of the Porters

Some had charge of the ministering vessels, to bring them in, and out.

Others had the charge of these, and other instruments, of the Sanctuary, when not in use, but stored up in the magazines.

Others, again, had the keeping of the magazines of "*fine flour, wine, oil, frankincense, and spices.*"

4. THE MUSICIANS, (Vocal and Instrumental), 4,000 in number,—*divided into twenty-four Courses, serving in rotation.*

The whole musical arrangements were under the direction of three "fathers of the Levites," as follows:—

(1.) Heman, a Kohathite, who conducted those who performed on the "*horn,*" (i.e., probably, wind instruments generally), and had, doubtless, partial direction of the singing.

(2.) Asaph, a Gershonite, who conducted those who were to "*prophecy,*" (used here in its literal sense of speaking forth), "*to the order of the king,*" (i.e., probably, to perform whatever Psalms David might entrust to them).

He appears to have been at the head of the vocal department, as well as to have led those who performed on the cymbals, and other instruments,—and, with his band, stood on Heman's right hand.

(3.) Ethan, (or Jeduthun), a Merarite, who conducted those that "*prophesied*" on the harp, (i.e., probably, stringed instruments generally),—and, doubtless, partly directed the singing. *He, with his band, stood on Heman's left hand.*

The sons of Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, with their children, formed a select body of highly-trained musicians, to the number of 288, who, with the three heads of song, seem to have been always on duty, and to have lived within the Temple precincts.

These 288 were divided into twenty-four minor Courses, (of twelve each), one of which seems to have been included in, and to have led, each of the larger courses into which the 4,000 were divided.

At the head of the twenty-four minor Courses were fourteen sons of Heman, four of Asaph, and six of Ethan, whose order was fixed, by lot, as follows :—

1. The Course of Joseph.	13. The Course of Shubael, (or
2. " " Gedaliah.	Shebuel).
3. " " Zaccur.	14. " " Mattithiah.
4. " " Izri, (or	15. " " Jerimoth.
Zeri).	16. " " Hananiah.
5. " " Nathaniah.	17. " " Joshbekash-
6. " " Bukkiah.	ah.
7. " " Jesharelah,	18. " " Hanani.
(or Asarelah).	19. " " Mallothi.
8. " " Jeshaiiah.	20. " " Eliathah.
9. " " Mattaniah.	21. " " Hothir.
10. " " Shimei.	22. " " Giddalti.
11. " " Azareel, (or	23. " " Mahazioth.
Uzziel).	24. " " Romamti-
12. " " Hashabiah.	ezer.

1, 3, 5, and 7, were under, and named after, the four sons of Asaph.

2, 4, 8, 10, 12, and 14, were under, and named after, the six sons of Jeduthun.

The other fourteen were under, and named after, the fourteen sons of Heman.

There is every reason to believe that these twenty-four were heads of the larger courses, as well as of the minor ones.

III. David's Preparations for building the Temple.

1. He drew the plan of the House, and organized its worship, and service,—being inspired by Jehovah in both these tasks, (just as Moses was Divinely instructed with regard to the Tabernacle).

2. Having calculated the gross amounts of various materials required, he proceeded to provide them, from the following sources :—

- (1.) Tyre and Zidon,—*Cedar-wood*.
- (2.) Various Parts of Palestine,—*Timber*; *Marble*, and other *hewn stones*, “in abundance.”
- (3.) The “Dedicated Things,”—*Gold*, 100,000 talents; *Silver*, 1,000,000 talents; *Iron*, and *Brass* (native copper), “without weight;” *Precious Stones*, (“onyx,” &c.).
- (4.) His own private Resources,—*Gold* “of Ophir,” 3,000 talents; *Silver* (refined), 7,000 talents.
- (5.) The Freewilling Offerings of Princes of the Tribes, and the other Heads of “The Congregation,”—*Gold*, 5,000 talents, and 10,000 “drams,” (probably the Persian “daric,” with which the captivity made the Jews familiar, so that they employed it as a standard of value, after their return. The golden “daric” = 25s. English); *Silver*, 10,000 talents; *Brass* (native copper), 18,000 talents; *Iron*, 100,000 talents; *Precious Stones* of various kinds.

3. He calculated the amount of materials needed for each purpose where metal was to be employed, and set the respective weights aside.

4. He assembled, for the work, the most skilful artizans, (stone-masons, carpenters, wood-carvers, lapidaries, &c.).

All this labour David performed cheerfully, and heartily, —being guided by a desire to do all he possibly could, (short of building the Temple), towards his cherished design; and by the fact that Solomon was “young and tender.”

The gold and silver contributed from the preceding sources would, (taking the *Hebrew* “talent” as the one meant, and regarding it as equal to about 125 lbs. Troy), come to the enormous total of 140,625,000 lbs. troy! while the value, (taking the gold = £4, and the silver = 5s. per oz.), would be about £1,029,375,000 sterling!!! Adding to this the value of the copper, iron, gems, timber, and hewn stone, we reach a sum that is simply fabulous,—sufficient, (Prideaux says), to have constructed the Temple of solid silver

There must be a great error somewhere. The different *ways out of the difficulty*, offered by authorities, are these :—

(1). *To take the reading of Josephus*,—viz., 10,000 talents of gold, and 100,000 talents of silver, as to the quantity of those metals appropriated from the “dedicated things,” (accepting the other figures as they stand). This, computed in English money, however, gives a total of $97\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling,—*far too high a figure still !*

(2). *To take the Arabic Version*, which gives 1000 talents of gold, and 1000 talents of silver, in place of 100,000, and 1,000,000 talents, respectively. This, (leaving the other figures as in our text), however, gives a total of £60,752,490, sterling,—*still too high !*

(3). *To regard the “talent” as the Babylonish standard of that name*, which was only a little more than one-half the Jewish. Then, taking the number of talents in our text, in Josephus, and in the Arabic Version, respectively, we obtain these values :—

Our text,—£600,468,750.

Josephus,—£88,593,750.

Arabic text,—£35,437,500.

All these seem still too high !

(4). *To look upon the “talent” as the Syriac standard of that name*, which was only one-fifth of the Babylonish. Then, taking the number of talents in the three different authorities, we arrive at these amounts :—

Our text,—£120,093,750.

Josephus,—£17,718,750.

Arabic text,—£7,087,500.

Neither of the last two estimates is impossible ; but, when we consider what a large amount has still to be added as the value of the other materials, the sum derived from following Josephus is improbable, and we are limited to the conclusion that there is an error in transcription in the Hebrew text,—that 1000 Syriac talents of gold, and the same of silver, were given by David out of the “things devoted,” and that the total value of the precious metals, contributed from all sources, was £7,087,500, sterling !

Prophets during David's reign.

(These did not of course form part of the "*Religious Institutions*" of the reign; but this seems the most suitable place in which to notice them).

(1.) **Gad**,—probably a pupil of Samuel,—joined David at the Cave of Adullam,—employed by Jehovah to offer the king one of three alternative punishments, for numbering the people, and to order him to sacrifice at Araunah's threshing-floor,—died, probably, about 1017.

As was noted, in the Introduction of this book, Gad seems to have composed a narrative of David's reign,—*"Now the acts of David . . . are written in . . . the book of Gad, the Seer."*

We find, too, (in II. Chron. xxix. 25), that, when Hezekiah reformed, and restored, the Temple worship, he set the Levites over the musical department, "according to the commandment of David, and of *Gad, the king's seer, and Nathan, the prophet:*" whence it seems evident that Gad, and Nathan, aided David in organizing the national worship.

(2.) **Nathan**,—first mentioned as approving, and then, (after a Divine revelation), as forbidding, the King's intention to build Jehovah a house,—denounced David, *in re* Bath-sheba and Uriah,—commissioned, by Jehovah, to call Solomon, "*Jedidiah*,"—greatly aided in thwarting Adonijah's scheme of seizing the throne,—supposed to have superintended the training of Solomon,—and to have died early in that king's reign.

Nathan's son, Zabad, was Solomon's "*principal officer*," and "*friend:*" and another of the prophet's sons, Azariah, was, in the same reign, "*over the officers.*"

Nathan is mentioned, in connection with Gad, (in the two passages already quoted), as writing a book containing the acts of David, and as having, with that monarch, and Gad, ordered the Temple worship.

Nathan was of the same house, in Judah, as David, and, indeed, belonged to an older branch of the family, for while *David was descended from Ram, second son of Hezron, Nathan sprang from Jerhameel, Hezron's eldest son*. The steps of the prophet's pedigree, are as follows:—

JUDAH, — Pharez, — Hezron, — Jerhameel, — Onam, — Nadab, — Appaim, — Ishi, — Sheshan, — Sheshan's daughter, he having no sons, (m. Jarha, an Egyptian), — Attai, — *Nathan*.

One of David's sons was named "*Nathan*," probably in honour of the prophet.

(3.) **Zadok**.—Though David styles him "*a seer*," (when he orders him, and Abiathar, back into the city, with the Ark), no instance of his acting as a prophet is recorded.

CIVIL INSTITUTIONS.

I. David's Cabinet, or Ministry.

There is no doubt that David *had* a Cabinet, consisting of the heads of Religion, Law, Civil Administration, Military Affairs, and the King's Household,—together with a few of his personal intimates.

Of these Ministers, or Advisers, *four lists are given*,—two in II. Samuel, and two in I. Chron., as follows:—

II. Sam. viii. 16-18.	II. Sam. xx. 23-26.	I. Chron. xviii. 15-17.	I. Chron. xxvii. 32-34.
—	—	—	—
<i>Joab</i> ,—"over the host."	Do.	Do.	<i>Jonathan</i> , David's uncle,—"a counsellor, wise man, & scribe."
<i>Jehoshaphat</i> , son of Ahilud, "recorder."	<i>Benaiah</i> , &c.	<i>Jehoshaphat</i> , &c.	<i>Jehiel</i> , son of Hachmoni,—"was with the King's sons."
<i>Zadok</i> , son of Ahitub, & <i>Abiathar</i> , son of Ahimelech,—"the priests."	<i>Adoram</i> ,—"over the tribute."	<i>Zadok</i> , and <i>Abiathar</i> , &c.	<i>Ahithophel</i> ,—"the King's counsellor."
<i>Seraiah</i> ,—"the scribe."	<i>Jehoshaphat</i> , &c.	<i>Shavsha</i> ,—"the scribe."	<i>Benaiah</i> , the son of Jehoiada. (The text has " <i>Jehoiada</i> , son of <i>Benaiah</i> ,"—an error of transcription).
<i>Benaiah</i> , son of Jehoiada,—"over the Cherethites and Pelethites."	<i>Sheva</i> , "the scribe."	<i>Benaiah</i> , &c.	<i>Abiathar</i> .
<i>David's sons</i> ,—"chief rulers."	<i>Zadok</i> , and <i>Abiathar</i> , &c.	<i>David's sons</i> ,—"chief about the King."	<i>Hushai</i> ,—"the King's companion."
	<i>Ira</i> , the Jairite, "a chief ruler about David."		<i>Joab</i> ,—"general of the King's army."

Taking II. Sam. viii. as the standard, the other three lists differ from it, respectively, thus:—

In II. Sam. xx. :—

Adoram and Ira are added,—David's sons are omitted,—and Seraiah is called Sheva: while those names that are common to both lists, are arranged differently.

In I. Chron. xviii. :—

The order agrees with the standard; and the only differences, in other respects, are, that Seraiah is called "Shavsha," and David's sons are described as "chief about the king," instead of "chief rulers."

In I. Chron. xxvii. :—

Added,—Jonathan, Jehiel, Ahithophel, and Hushai.

Omitted,—Zadok, Seraiah, and "David's sons."

The offices of Benaiah, and of Abiathar, are not mentioned.

The insertion of Ahithophel; and the omission of Zadok, and David's sons, seem to shew that this list is meant to refer to a time when "the Gilonite" still lived,—when Zadok had not yet been admitted to the high position he afterwards occupied,—and when David's sons were too young to hold office. The list in II. Sam. viii., and that in I. Chron. xviii., seem to come next in order of time; and that in II. Sam. xx. may be regarded as chronologically last.

These lists differing so much in order of arrangement and in other respects, it is impossible to say how the individuals ranked in order of importance; the only classification feasible rests upon their respective departments in the State. Adopting this, the following seems to be a correct

List of David's ministers, according to their Offices :—

1. **MINISTERS OF WORSHIP,—ZADOK, and ABIATHAR.**

2. " " **WAR,—JOAB, and BENAIAH.**

3. " " **FINANCE,—ADORAM, (or Adoniram).**

His special office was "*over the tribute*," i.e., he was *Receiver-General of Taxes*; holding his post during the reigns of David and Solomon, and being stoned by the Revolted Tribes, when sent amongst them, by Rehoboam, to collect the imposts.

4. **SECRETARY OF STATE, and CHIEF LAW OFFICER,—SERAIAH, (called also "Sheva," "Shisha," and "Shavsha").**

He is designated "*the scribe*," but the title did not, at

9. TUTOR, OR GUARDIAN, OF DAVID'S SONS,—JEHIEL.

He is said, in the list wherein his name appears, to have been "*with the King's sons.*" This is generally understood as bearing the interpretation of his having had the call of bringing up the young princes, until they arrived at manhood.

It may, however, indicate, that he held *the same rank that David's sons did*, viz., that of "*a chief ruler*,"—in which case it is possible he may be the same as Ira, before mentioned.

10. "CHIEF RULERS,"—"DAVID'S SONS."

In what their duties consisted, it is impossible to affirm with certainty: it seems most probable that they acted as their father's deputies, or vicegerents, each supervising some special department of government, just as Ira had the general superintendence of the household.

Some, however, regard the expression "*chief rulers*" as meaning "*Ecclesiastical counsellors, or chief church lawyers.*"

II. The Princes of the Tribes:—

(The original Princes were the eldest sons of the founders of the different Tribes; afterwards, it would appear that the post became elective). In rank and function, these officers seem to have resembled our Lords-Lieutenant of counties. The following is the

List of Princes, under David:—

<i>Tribe.</i>	<i>Prince.</i>
1. REUBEN,	Eliezer.
2. SIMEON,	Shephatiah.
3. LEVITES,	Hashabiah.
4. AARONITES,	Zadok.
5. JUDAH,	Elihu, (or <i>Eliab</i>), " <i>David's brother.</i> "
6. ISSACHAR,	Omri.
7. ZEBULUN,	Ishmaiah.
8. NAPHTALI,	Jerimoth.
9. EPHRAIM,	Hoshea.
10. MANASSEH, (<i>W. of Jordan</i>),	Joel.
11. MANASSEH, (<i>E. of Jordan</i>),	Iddo.
12. BENJAMIM,	Jaasiel.
13. DAN,	Azareel.

It is remarkable that, in this List,—

- (1). **GAD** and **ASHER** are not named,—an unaccountable omission.
- (2). **LEVI** appears coördinate with the other Tribes.
- (3). **THE AARONITES**, *who were only a family of the Levites, are represented as a distinct Tribe, and, like Levi, coördinate with the rest,—while ZADOK is mentioned as its “Prince.”*

From this we gather, then, that the Priests and Levites were not altogether debarred from Civil *status*, and office.

It is clear, also, that neither were the Tribe of Levi shut out from *military* functions, for we find Zadok and the “*Sons of Shemaiah*” distinguished as “*mighty men of valour*,” while *Benaiah*, the heroic Captain of the Life-guard, was son of Jehoiada, a High-priest.

MILITARY INSTITUTIONS.

Until the time of Saul, the Hebrews had no standing army; but all the males between 20 and 50 were liable to service in time of war,—the number called out depending upon the force of the enemy.

Saul, however, early in his reign, laid the foundation of a standing army, by choosing 3000 warriors,—2000 to remain with himself, and 1000 with Jonathan.

This force was, as a rule, sufficiently strong to repel the Philistines’ attacks; but when they, or other foes, made a formidable demonstration, it was still necessary to call out a proportion of the warriors of each Tribe equal to the emergency.

David, building upon the basis laid by Saul, constructed a complete and admirable military organization, the three great features of which were The National Militia, (or Army),—The Royal Life-Guard,—and The “Mighty Men.”

1. The National Militia, or Army:—

All the male population liable to service seem to have been divided into twelve equal portions, each of which, in rotation, supplied a legion of 24,000 men, who served for one month at a time, in the course of the year. It would appear that the respective

Legions did not necessarily consist of the same individuals upon every recurrence of their month to take the field; but that it was so arranged, that all the warriors of each of the twelve bodies should take their turn in the ranks.

There were thus, always, 24,000 men under arms, and available for war, while, in cases of emergency, any additional portion, or even the whole, of the national force, might be called out.

By these arrangements, the warriors of the Tribes were kept in a state of efficiency; while the standing army, though equal to ordinary occasions, was not so numerous as to be any great burden upon the people.

The Officers of the National Militia were

(1.) **JOAB**, the *generalissimo*, who, however, was only second in command when the King took the field with his troops.

(2.) **THE COMMANDERS OF THE TWELVE LEGIONS**, who were chosen from the "*chief fathers*," (i.e. the heads of tribes and clans), and corresponded to the modern *Generals of Division*.

Those holding this office under David were

For the 1st Month,—Jashobeam, "*chief of all the Captains.*"

„ 2nd „ Dodai, (or Dodo), having Mikloth for his *Lieutenant*.

„ 3rd „ Benaiah, (son of Jehoiada), with his son Ammizabad for *Lieutenant*.

„ 4th „ Asahel, with his son Zebadiah for *Lieutenant*.

„ 5th „ Shamhuth.

„ 6th „ Ira.

„ 7th „ Helez.

„ 8th „ Sibbecai.

„ 9th „ Abiezer.

„ 10th „ Maharai.

„ 11th „ Benaiah, (an Ephraimite).

„ 12th „ Heldai.

(3.) **THE CAPTAINS OF THOUSANDS**,—corresponding to our *Colonels*,—the *Thousand* being equivalent to our *Regiment*.

(4.) **THE CAPTAINS OF HUNDREDS**,—corresponding to our *Captains*,—the *Hundred* being equivalent to our *Company*.

This organization would appear not to have survived the Schism, for, under Jehoshaphat, we find the army divided into five unequal portions, each under a separate commander.

2. The Royal Life-Guard, or Body-Guard, consisting of the

Cherethites and Pelethites, *under the command of BENAIAH*, son of Jehoiada.

It is generally admitted that these formed David's body-guard, but *who and what they respectively were, beyond this, is a much debated point.*

The following are the different views taken by various authorities :—

1. SOME REGARD THE TERMS AS PROPER NAMES:—

These take the term CHERETHITES to mean *Philistines*, since it is so employed in three passages in the Old Testament; but they are divided between two opinions as to the application of the word in the present case; thus,

(1.) One set of critics assert that they were actually *Philistines, mercenaries of David.*

(2.) The other set make them to have been those of David's followers, during his exile, who dwelt with him in the *Philistines' country*, and assumed the title CHERETHITES, *in honorable commemoration of their devotion to the king during that period of his career.*

Of these two views, the former seems the more likely, for

a. *The body-guard of Eastern princes is, as a rule, composed of foreign mercenaries, often belonging to even some hostile nation,—the reason for such a choice being, that these aliens, having no stake or interest in their adopted country, are far likelier to prove faithful to the monarch employing them.*

b. *We find Ittai, with 600 Philistines, coming, and offering his services to David,—a step easily explained, if we suppose that he knew the king already had a band of Philistines in his pay.*

With regard to the PELETHITES, all agree to understand those followers of David who joined him at Ziklag. Amongst these an individual named *Pelet*, or *Peleth*, is

mentioned ; it is suggested that *he became captain of this band, and that from him it took its appellation.*

2. SOME REGARD THE TERMS, not as Proper Names but AS COMMON NOUNS, *indicating the functions of the two bands.* Of these critics

(1.) Part follow the Targum, and translate "archers," instead of "CHERETHITES,"—and "slingers," instead of "PELETHITES."

(2.) Others would read, "headsmen," (or "executioners,") for "CHERETHITES,"—and "couriers," for "PELETHITES."

They derive the two words from Hebrew verbs meaning, respectively, to cut off, and to run swiftly, and regard the CHERETHITES as analogous to the Roman lictors, and the PELETHITES as royal messengers.

In support of their view of the PELETHITES' office, they refer to the facts that,

a. In the E. it is the monarch's life-guard that executes capital sentences.

b. Benaiah is actually found acting as "executioner."

Now, it is remarkable that, *with the exception of the theory that the CHERETHITES were David's original followers, who assumed the name from their residence with him at Gath, all these different interpretations may be made to harmonize, thus :—*

(a.) *In re the CHERETHITES.*—Regarding them as Philistines, they would certainly be "archers," for the nation was famous for its skill in the use of the bow ; while there is no reason why they should not have acted as "headsmen."

(b.) *In re the PELETHITES.*—Regarding them as those Israelites who joined David at Ziklag, we find, that these were mostly Benjamites, and that they were "armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones, and shooting arrows out of a bow." Thus the PELETHITES actually were skilful "slingers," while there is no reason to oppose the view that, active as the Benjamites are represented, they should have been also royal "couriers."

Summing up results :—

(1.) THE CHERETHITES AND PELETHITES FORMED DAVID'S BODY-GUARD.

(2.) **THE CHERETHITES WERE PHILISTINE MERCENARIES**,—skilled, (as all the nation were), as “archers,” and probably, having for one of their main functions to execute capital and other punishments ordered by the king.

(3.) **THE PELETHITES WERE THOSE ISRAELITES WHO JOINED DAVID AT ZIKLAG**,—were skilful archers and “slingers,” and were, probably, employed as king’s “couriers.”

The Captain of David’s Body-Guard was, (as has been before stated), BENAIAH, the son of Jehoiada.

3. The Mighty Men, or Heroes, (*Heb.* “Gibborim.”)

It is a much debated point who these were.

The most probable view is that THEY FORMED A KIND OF MILITARY ORDER, embracing the bravest warriors of the nation.

Some represent the Order as consisting of just 600 men, asserting that David fixed upon that number to commemorate his having been supported in his exile by 600 valiant Hebrews. Those who are of this opinion give to the 600 a complete organization, representing it as divided into three main bodies of 200 each, and 30 smaller ones of 20 each, with the following officers:—

1. *The Captain of the “Mighty Men,”* (chief of the Order), **ABISHAI**.

2. *The Three “Mighties,”* (commanders of 200 each), **ADINO, ELEAZAR, and SHAMMAH**.

3. *The “Thirty,”* (commanders of 20 each), as named in II. Samuel.

Most careful study of the two parallel passages, (in II. Sam. and I. Chron.), containing an account of the “Mighty Men,” not only fails to justify the preceding view, but even flatly contradicts it on most points.

Our opinion is that

THE MIGHTY MEN were a Military Order, including all warriors who specially distinguished themselves,—numbering at first thirty individuals,—and divided (like our own Orders of Knighthood), into grades, of which there were three:—

1. *The three “CHIEF OF THE MIGHTY MEN,”*—**ADINO**, (Captain of the three), **ELEAZAR**; and **SHAMMAH**.

2. Three "**MIGHTIES**," (ranking next to the first three), —**ABISHAI**, (Captain of these three), **BENAIAH**, and **A THIRD WHOSE NAME IS NOT GIVEN**.

3. The "**VALIANT MEN OF THE ARMIES**,"—(forming the lowest rank of the Order).

These were at first styled "**THE THIRTY**," from that being *their original number*, which, however, increased, as fresh acts of bravery brought other heroes into notice, and won them a place in this *Legion of Honour*.

Instead then, of a regularly constituted, separate, body of 600 men,

The "**Gibborim**" formed simply an Order of Knighthood, of three ranks; numbering, at first, only thirty members; and continually increasing.

That it was not a distinct force is evident from the fact that, amongst its members, we find names of captains of the National Militia, and of the Body-Guard. These could not hold command in two bodies at the same time, whereas their merely bearing a title of honour would be no bar to their fulfilling the duties of *one* command.

The Biblical Account of David's Mighty Men.

II. SAM. XXIII. 8-17.

The three Chiefs of the "**Gibborim**":—

1. Adino, who slays 800 at one time.
2. Eleazar, who, with two other "**Mighties**," and David, stands firm against the Philistines when the Hebrews have fled, and wins a great victory.
3. Shammah, who aids Eleazar in the above exploit.

These three join David at Adullam.—He longs for water from the well at Beth-lehem, then the Philistines' stronghold;—the three break through the Philistine host, and bring him the water;—he refuses to drink it.

N.B.—The differences between the account of the “Mighty Men,” in Sam., and that in the parallel in I. Chron., are all noted, and should be carefully studied.

v. 8. “The Tachmonite . . . Eznite.”—I. Chron.—“Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains.”

The marginal reading of the passage in Saml. is,—“*Joseb-basebeth, the Tachmonite, chief among the three, Adino, of Ezni.*”

Some think that *two* heroes are here mentioned,—Jashobeam, or Joseb-basebeth, and Adino the Eznite; but there is not sufficient ground for this view. *One* individual is, doubtless, meant,—*Jashobeam*, or *Joseb-basebeth*, being his title as chief; *Adino* his proper name; and *Hachmonite*, or *Tachmonite*, his patronymic as belonging to the family of Hachmoni, or Tachmoni.

A *Jashobeam* joined David at Ziklag, and an individual so named, son of Zabdiel, was commander of the legion of 24,000 serving during the month Nisan: the latter was, probably, the same as the Tachmonite of the text; but the former was, most likely, another person.

It is somewhat remarkable that so little should be recorded of one who stood highest amongst the *Gibborim*.

“800.”—I. Chron., “300.”—Some suppose an error in transcription, and make both texts read “300.” *This seems the best reconciliation.*

Others combine the two passages thus,—“He lift up his spear against 800, and slew 300 of them.”

Others, again, suppose he slew 800 in one battle, and 300 in another.

For “*slew*,” many authorities would substitute “*broke through*,”—regarding the slaughter of even the smaller number, 300, as an apocryphal act for one man. But we have many equally, and even more, extraordinary exploits recorded in the Bible, (*e.g.*, in the cases of Shamgar and Samson), and in ancient authors generally. But there is nothing incredible in these records, when it is considered that in modern warfare there is rarely opportunity for the display, in battle, of personal valor; whereas, in ancient times, an engagement was a conflict of individuals, rather than of masses, each warrior fighting on his own responsibility, and in the manner seeming to him most likely to aid in gaining the day.

v. 9. "*With David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together.*"—There is here an omission of the name of the place to which "*there*" refers; I. Chron. supplies this by inserting after "*With David,*" "*at Pas-dammim.*" This place is called in I. Sam. *Ephes-dammim*, (= *the boundary of blood*). It lay between Shochoh and Azekah, and seems to have taken its name from the constant battles occurring there, between Saul and the Philistines. It was here that David slew Goliath. Of the occurrence in the text we have no record beyond this bare mention; it happened, however, most probably, during David's Second Philistine War.

I. Chron. states that the stand was made by David and the *Mighties*, "where was a parcel of ground full of barley," in the midst of which they set themselves, and delivered it, &c.

"*Were gone away,*"—i.e., "*fled,*" (as I. Chron. tells us).

Chron. does not distinctly state that Eleazar distinguished himself more than David, Adino, and Shammah; but Sam. plainly intimates such to have been the case.

v. 11. "*Shammah*"—is not named in I. Chron. The exploit narrated here of him is, evidently, the share he had in the engagement at Pas-dammim, where Eleazar played the chief part.

Three individuals named *Shammah* appear in the list of heroes:—

1. The one in the text.

2. *Shammah*, the Harodite, (in I. Chron., "*Shammoth, the Harorite,*" and "*Shamuth, the Izrahite*"), commander of the legion of 24,000 during the fifth month.

3. *Shammah*, the Hararite, (in I. Chron., "*Shama, the Aroërite*").

"*Where was . . . full of lentiles.*"—This is evidently the same as the "parcel of ground full of *barley*" mentioned in Chron. in connection with Eleazar's exploit: the tract of land was, most likely, sown *partly with barley, and partly with lentiles*.

v. 13. "*Three of the thirty chief,*"—evidently Adino, Eleazar, and *Shammah*, for, further on, we read—"These things did *these three mighty men,*" (or, as I. Chron. has it, "*these three mightiest.*")

"*The cave of Adullam,*"—where David took refuge, when Achish gave him an unfavorable reception. Here,

we learn, (I. Sam. xxii. 1, 2), he was joined by 400 men, consisting of relatives, those in distress and debt, and malcontents; amongst these would be the three heroes of the Beth-lehem exploit.

v. 15. "*The well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate,*"—would seem to be the same as a fountain still existing, in a deep valley, on the N.E. of the town; its water is peculiarly delicious.

CHAPTER XXIII.; 18-23.

The first two of the second three of the "Gibborim":—

1. Abishai, who slays 300 with his spear.
2. Benaiah, who slays two lion-like men of Moab,—a lion,—and an Egyptian;—and is set over David's "Guard."

v. 18. "*Slew them,*"—i.e., at one time. Who the 300 were, and when they fell by his hand, is not stated here, or elsewhere; probably, they were portion of the 18,000 Edomites whom David, Joab, and Abishai, slew, in the Valley of Salt,—or they may have been Philistines, slain by him during the battle wherein he saved David from Ishbi-benob, and smote that giant.

v. 19. "*He attained not unto the first three,*"—yet, in flat opposition to this clear statement, authorities declare him to have been the chief of the whole body of Mighty Men!

v. 20. "*Two lionlike men,*"—i.e., with "*faces,*" "like the faces of lions," as the Gadites, who joined David at Ziklag, are said to have been.

The Lion is the only animal whose face is, in Scripture, likened to that of man! The resemblance is rarely noted, but is absolutely startling!

These Moabites were, doubtless, gigantic champions.

"*Pit,*"—rather "*cave.*"—Doubtless, Benaiah took shelter from the snow in a cave, into which the beast had also entered, with the same purpose.

Or, it may be, the "*pit*" was an empty water-cistern, which the snow had filled up, so that the lion fell into it unsuspectingly.

The former seems the more probable explanation, for to slay a lion cooped up in a cistern would need little bravery, or force.

"*In time of snow*,"—I. Chron. has, "*in a snowy day*."

v. 21. "*A goodly man*,"—I. Chron. has, "*a man of great stature, five cubits high*," and adds that his "*spear*" was "*like a weaver's beam*."

How, when, and where, this "*Egyptian*" fell is not recorded. It was, probably, in some battle with the Philistines, who came, originally, from Egypt.

v. 22. "*The name*,"—rather "*a name*": *Abishai* had the name amongst this second trio.

v. 23. "*His guard*,"—i.e., the Body-Guard, the "*Cherethites and Pelethites*." Holding this command, he could not, in any given campaign, or battle, act as captain of a portion of the *Gibborim*, as those who regard them as a separate force would make him do.

CHAPTER XXIII. 24-end.

The Rest of the "*Gibborim*."

These, with several additional names, are styled, in I. Chron., "*The valiant men of the armies*,"—another proof that the *Gibborim* merely formed an Order, conferred, irrespective of number, upon any warrior who might distinguish himself.

The following are the lists, of the rest of the Mighty Men, as given in II. Sam., and I. Chron., respectively:—

IN II. SAMUEL.

1. Asahel, the brother of Joab, "*was one of the thirty*."
2. Elhanan, son of Dodo, of Beth-lehem.
3. Shammah, the Harodite.
4. Elikah, the Harodite.
5. Helez, the Paltite.
6. Ira, son of Ikesh, the Tekoite.

IN I. CHRONICLES.

1. Asahel, the brother of Joab.
2. Same as in Sam.
3. Shammoth, the Harorite.
No corresponding name given.
4. Helez, the Pelonite.
5. Same as in Sam.

IN II. SAMUEL.

7. Abiezer, the Anethothite.
8. Mebunnai, the Hushathite.
9. Zalmon, the Abohite.
10. Maharai, the Netophathite.
11. Heleb, son of Baanah, a Netophathite.
12. Ittai, son of Ribai, of Gibeah, a Benjamite.
13. Benaiah, the Pirathonite.
14. Hiddai, of the brooks of Gaash.
15. Abi-albon, the Arbathite.
16. Azmaveth, the Barhumite.
17. Eliahba, the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen.
18. Jonathan.
19. Shammah, the Hararite.
20. Ahiam, son of Sharar, the Hararite.
21. Eliphelet, son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite.
22. Eliam, son of Ahithophel, the Gilonite.
23. Hezrai, the Carmelite.
24. Paarai, the Arbite.
25. Igal, son of Nathan of Zobah.
26. Bani, the Gadite.
27. Zelek, the Ammonite.
28. Nahari, the Beerothite, "armour-bearer to Joab."
29. Ira, an Ithrite.

IN I. CHRONICLES.

6. Abiezer, the Antothite.
7. Sibbecai, the Hushathite.
8. Itai, the Ahohite.
9. Same as in Sam.
10. Heled, &c., (as in Sam.).
11. Ithai, &c., (as in Sam.).
12. Same as in Sam.
13. Hurai, &c., (as in Sam.).
14. Abiel, the Arbathite.
15. Azmaveth, the Baharumite.
16. Same as in Sam., omitting "of the sons," &c.
17. Jonathan, son of Shage, the Hararite.
18. ? Shama, son of Hothan, the Aroërite.
(Not given in this order: questionable if he was the same as Shammah.)
19. Ahiam, son of Sacar, the Hararite.
20. ? Eliphal, son of Ur.
- No corresponding name given.
21. Hezro, the Carmelite.
22. Naarai, son of Ezbai.
23. ? Joel, brother of Nathan.
- No corresponding name given.
24. Same as in Sam.
25. Naharai, the Berothite, "armour-bearer," &c.
26. Same as in Sam.

IN II. SAMUEL.

30. Gareb, an Ithrite.
31. Uriah, the Hittite.

The text adds, "*Thirty and seven in all.*"

Only 36, however, are given, the 37th, (and omitted), one, being the 3rd of the second three "Heroes." Who he was, it is difficult to say; but it is very likely that it was *Joab himself*. Perhaps *he* originally drew up the list, as it appears in Sam., and, from a sense of propriety, or from a dislike to set himself down only 6th on the list, omitted his own name, and achievements.

The "Thirty," it will be seen, amount to 31.

This may be accounted for by one of two suppositions:—

1. "Thirty" is 31 in round numbers.
2. The original number was Thirty; but a 31st had been added before the list was drawn up.

N.B.—Those who do not care to learn the additional names given in Chron. may substitute the following account of them.—Besides twenty-eight, (including "*Shama*"), corresponding to that number of the thirty-one given in Sam., Chron. supplies eighteen additional individual names, (or nineteen, if "*Shama*" be not "*Shammah*"), and mentions "thirty Reubenites," and "the sons of Hashem" (without indicating their number.)

IN I. CHRONICLES.

27. Same as in Sam.
28. Ditto.

The names additional to those given in Sam. are

1. Zabad, son of Ahlai.
 2. Hanan, son of Maachak.
 3. Joshaphat, the Mithnite.
 4. Uzzia, the Ashterathite.
 5. Jehiel, son of Hothan, the Aroërite, (brother of Shama.)
 6. Jediael, son of Shimri.
 7. Joha, his, (*i.e.* Jediael's), brother, the Tizite.
 8. Eliel, the Mahavite.
 9. Jeribai, } Sons of
 10. Joshaviab, } Elnaam.
 11. Ithmah, the Moabite.
 12. Eliel.
 13. Obed.
 14. Jasiel, the Mesobaïte.
 15. Adina, son of Shiza, the Reubenite,—“a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him.”
 16. Hephher, the Mecherathite.
 17. Ahijah, the Pelonite.
 18. Mibhar, son of Haggeri.
- And “The sons of Hashem, the Gizonite,” (the number of whom is not given.)

The chief differences between the two lists are as follows :—

1. *In the number of names :—*

Three, (or four), of the thirty-one given in Sam. are omitted in Chron., while the latter supplies a large number of names additional to those in the former.

These numerical discrepancies may be accounted for on the ground that the list in Chron. is the product of a much later period, than its parallel in Sam.

During the interval between the two, other warriors would have distinguished themselves so as to merit enrolment in the order; while three, (or four), had their names struck off the roll, *probably on account of some dishonourable action*, as may be inferred from the fact that *one* of the omissions is that of "*Eliam, son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,*"—his father's treason, (in which, perhaps, himself, shared), being quite sufficient cause why his name should be erased.

It is clear that *death* was not the cause of the leaving-out of the names in Chron., for "*Asahel*" appears in that list, and also in the one in Sam., and *he* was dead before *either* of the accounts was written.

2. *In many cases* where Sam. has its parallel in Chron., *the name* of the hero himself, or of his father, clan, or place of birth or abode, *is either totally different, or spelled differently, in the respective lists.*

These differences are to be accounted for thus :—

(1.) *The two words may be synonymous,—e.g., "Abi-albon"* is called "*Abiel*" in Chron. Both mean "*father of strength.*"

(2.) The Hebrews frequently had two *non-synonymous* names, for both persons and places.

(3.) Transcribers, and translators, have erred, through carelessness, or ignorance.

The establishment, by David, of a thorough national military organization, is owing, doubtless, to the observations made by him whilst amongst the Philistines, who were the most accomplished warriors bordering upon the Hebrews.

The Hebrew forces were, at David's succession, composed entirely of foot-soldiers. It had been strictly commanded by Jehovah, when He foretold, through Moses, that the

people would hereafter insist upon having a king,—“He shall not multiply horses to himself,” (the reason given for the prohibition being lest he should “cause the people to return to Egypt”).

This prohibition seems to have been meant, however, to extend only until the Hebrews had become firmly settled in the country, which they may be regarded as having done only in David's reign.

Be this as it may, we find David reserving, of the horses taken by him from Hadadezer, sufficient for 100 chariots. Many authorities represent these as being intended for state-equipages only,—an utterly unlikely thing! There is no doubt that he introduced chariots into the National Army, otherwise, it is simply incredible, (unless we regard them as miracles), that he should have won so many battles, against serious odds, and in conflict with foes themselves possessing vast numbers of chariots; for, though Toi may have helped against *Hadadezer* with mounted forces, there is no ground whatever for supposing him as aiding in the succeeding wars with *other* nations.

For the transit of baggage, stores, &c., &c., it does not appear that horses were used; *camels* were, most probably, the animals so employed, (the tribes E. of Jordan having taken 50,000 of these from the Hagarites).

The formation of a standing army that should form a token, and an engine, of despotism, had been predicted by Samuel, as part of the evil to come in the train of the appointment of a monarch:—

“He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties.” (I. Sam. viii. 11, 12.)

DAVID'S PERSONAL ESTABLISHMENT.

I. Certain Members of the Cabinet, (whose functions have been previously described under “*Civil Institutions*”).

These were—

1. The Private Secretary,—Jonathan.
2. The Comptroller of the Household,—Ira.
3. Guardian, or Tutor of the Princes,—Jehiel.

II. Twelve "Rulers of David's Substance," (who may be termed "*Royal Bailiffs*").

1. "Over the King's Treasures,"Azmaveth.
2. "Over the Storehouses in the fields, cities, villages, and castles,"Jehonathan.
3. Over the Agricultural Labourers,Ezri.
4. "Over the Vineyards,"Shimei.
5. "Over the Increase of the Vineyards, for the Wine-Cellars,"Zabdi.
6. Over the Olives and Sycamores "*in the low plains*,"Baal-Hanan.
7. "Over the Cellars of Oil,"Joash.
8. "Over the Herds that fed in Sharon," ...Shitrai.
9. "Over the Herds that were in the Valleys," ...Shaphat.
10. "Over the Camels,"Obil.
11. "Over the Asses,"Jehdeiah.
12. "Over the Flocks,"Jaziz.

(This list indicates several of the sources of the monarch's income.)

DAVID'S COMMERCE.

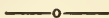
David was more of a warrior than political economist, and seems, accordingly, to have taken little trouble to develop the commercial resources and opportunities of the kingdom.

With Hiram, King of Tyre, (and also with Zidon), there was considerable trade; but this was owing to the sagacity of that monarch, not to David.

After the reduction of Edom, the ports of Ezion-geber, and Elah, on the Red Sea, were in the power of David; but he appears to have made no commercial use of them. The same may be said of the trade of the Euphrates, which was open to him.

It must be allowed, however, in fairness, that this apparent neglect must, in great measure, have been owing to David's not possessing mounted forces wherewith to protect the merchants who would have carried on the commerce with the ports on the Arabian Sea, and with the Euphrates.

EPITOME OF LIFE OF JOAB.



Joab = God-fathered.

Second son of Zeruiah, David's sister, and, therefore, *David's nephew*: Abishai was his elder, and Asahel, his younger, brother.

B. C.

? Born.

(Accompanied David through his exile, and was appointed general-in-chief of his army, when he became King of Judah.

? Defeats Abner, at Gibeon; Abner slays Asahel.

1053. Slays Abner.

1048. Scales the "Fortress of the Jebusites," and so, according to David's promise, becomes Generalissimo of the entire Hebrew Army.

1037. Defeats, in conjunction with Abishai, the Syro-Ammonite League.

? With David, and Abishai, defeats the Edomites in the Valley of Salt; devastates their country.

1035. Besieges Rabbah,—aids David in murdering Uriah.

1033. Sends to David to invite his presence at the Taking of Rabbah. Fall of that city.

1027. Procures Absalom's return from Geshur.

1025. Compelled by Absalom, procures the latter's return to his father's Court.

1023. Defeats, and slays, Absalom,—chides David for his unseemly grief, and compels him to appear in public.

1022. Superseded by Amasa; slays him,—joins, (as a volunteer), Abishai's forces against Sheba; slays Amasa; assumes the chief command of the expedition; besieges Sheba, in Abel; the rebel's head being thrown to him, he raises the siege.

1017. Remonstrates with David, against Numbering the People.

This is the extent of particulars concerning Joab that are to be found in II. Samuel.

(It will be seen that his name does not occur in many of David's campaigns: we must not, however, suppose that he took no share in them. He was, probably, engaged in

every important battle in David's reign ; but he is mentioned *by name* only in those engagements wherein he most distinguished himself.)

His after career was as follows:—

1015. Joins the plot to place Adonijah on the throne,—not punished ; but retires into private life.
David, on his death-bed, urges Solomon to find a pretence for putting Joab to death, because he had slain Abner, and Amasa, treacherously, "*in time of peace*," (conveniently forgetting that the great captain had been his own willing instrument in Uriah's murder!!)
1014. Solomon professing to believe him privy to Adonijah's asking for Abishag, Joab flees, in alarm, to the "horns of the Altar," and, refusing to come forth, is there slain by Solomon's orders ; is carried to his domain in the Wilderness of Judah, and there buried.

Character.—Brave, vigorous, active, ardent,—with a powerful military genius.

Cruel and unscrupulous.

His great redeeming quality was fidelity to his king,—shewn in his slaying Absalom, (at the risk of losing David's favour) ; his cleaving to David's cause, though Absalom was his intimate friend ; his remonstrances against David's excessive grief ; and his imploring him not to number the people.

In spite, however, of all this, and of Joab's wicked subserviency, *in re* Uriah, David constantly behaved ungratefully to him, as has been already shewn.

On the merits of the slaying of Abner and Amasa, remark is made in the fitting place.

PRINCIPAL DATES.

									B.C.
David's reign at Hebron...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1055-1048.
Battle of Gibeon ;	}	?							
Abner slain.		...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1053
Ish-bosheth slain.		...	...	...	...	...	...	...

David takes Jerusalem.	1048.
Philistines defeated in Valley of Rephaim.	1043.
Ark removed to Jerusalem.	1042.
Philistines, Moabites, and Syrians conquered. } ...	1040.
Mephi-bosheth adopted, by David. }	
Nahash dies; Hanun's insults to David's Em- bassy.— }	1037.
Ammon and Syrians in league, and defeated. }	
Syrian League defeated.	1036.
Rabbah besieged. }	
David's Adultery, and Murder of Uriah. }	1035.
Birth of Solomon. }	
Rabbah taken; }	
End of Ammonite War. }	1033.
Amnon slain.	1030.
Absalom in exile.	1030-1027.
Absalom's Rebellion; }	
Battle of Ephraim; }	1023.
Absalom slain. }	
Sheba's Revolt; }	
Amasa and Sheba slain. }	1022.
Three Years' Famine on account of Saul's slaughter of Gibeonites. }	1022-1019.
David's Last Philistine War.	1018.
David numbers the People; the consequent Pestilence. }	1017.

GEOGRAPHY OF II. SAMUEL.

N.B.—All the following must be filled in, from memory, upon a Blank Outline, which, also, should be drawn from memory, and should be sufficiently large to include ALL names in this list!

MOUNTAINS.—Gilboa, Mount of Olives.

RIVERS.—Jordan (with its lakes), Euphrates, the Brook Kidron.

WOOD of Ephraim.

VALLEYS.—Valley of Rephaim, Valley of the Jordan.

PLAINS.—Plain of the Wilderness (of Jordan).

THE BOUNDARIES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES, with the towns which are named under each:—

W. OF JORDAN:—

Simeon,—Ziklag, Beer-sheba.

Judah,—Jerusalem, Hebron, Kirjath-jearim (*Baal*, or Baalah), Carmel, Beth-lehem, Jezreel, Adullam, Gibeah, Bahurim, Tekoa, Giloh, Zelah.

Dan, (S.),—Gath-rimmon.

Dan, (N.),—Dan, (Laish, or Leshem).

Benjamim,—Gilgal, Gibeon, Geba, Beeroth, Gibeah “of Saul.”

Ephraim.—*nil*.

Half Manasseh.—Ahel-Meholah, Thebez.

Issachar.—Beth-shan, Jezreel.

Zebulun,—*nil*.

Asher,—*nil*.

Naphtali,—*nil*.

E. OF JORDAN:—

Half Manasseh,—*nil*.

Gad,—Jabesh-Gilead, Mahanaim, Lo-debar (Debir), Rogelim, Jazer.

Reuben,—Aroer.

DISTRICTS, TRIBES, &c. (not Hebrew),—

N.—Phœnicia, (with Tyre, and Zidon), Geshur, Zobah, Damascus, Hamath, Rehob, Ish-tob, Hivites, Maachah.

E.—Gilead, Hagarites, Ammonites (with Rabbah).

S.—Amalekites, Edomites, Hittites (in “Mountains of Judah”).

S.E.—Moab.

In Centre of Palestine,—Hivites.

In S.W. do.,—Philistines (with their four “lordships,” Gath, Gaza, Askelon, and Ashdod.)

TO BE MARKED ON A PLAN OF JERUSALEM.—

INSIDE THE CITY:—

Mount Bezetha, (the “New City”).

„ Acra, or Millo, (the “Lower City”).

„ Zion, (the “Upper City”), with supposed site of David’s Palace.

„ Moriah, with supposed site of Temple.

OUTSIDE THE CITY:—

E.—Tomb of Absalom, Mount of Olives, Valley of Jehoshaphat.

S.—En-rogel.

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